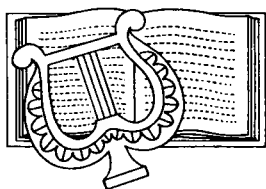


Emory University Library



In Memoriam

Ruth Candler Lovett

1935-1964



VARIETIES OF LIFE.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,
Skinner-Street, London.

VARIETIES OF LIFE;

OR,

CONDUCT AND CONSEQUENCES.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR
OF "SKETCHES OF CHARACTER."

"If I give speeches and conversations, I ought to give them justly; for the *humours* and *characters* of persons cannot be known, unless I repeat what they say, and their *manner* of saying."

RICHARDSON.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1815.

VARIETIES OF LIFE.

CHAP. I.

THE bells rang a merry peal, and bride-cake was despatched in all directions, with "Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Ponsonby's compliments," while the happy couple set off on a short tour, previously to their proceeding to Woodsbourne, the family seat in Essex, agreeably to an invitation they had received from Mr. and Mrs. Ponsonby.

The visions of Elizabeth's sanguine

imagination now seemed realized :—" an elegant man," with " an elegant name," had actually fallen in love with her, and had led her to the hymeneal altar. His family was of that distinguished rank, which ensured her an introduction into that circle of fashion, in which she felt she was born to shine. All her wishes seemed accomplished: Elizabeth was the happiest of women.

Frederick's reflections were not quite so agreeable: on their journey, comparisons between his wife and his sisters, would continually intrude; and he acutely felt, that the style of life to which she was now to be introduced, was very different from that which she had been accustomed to.

His father retained much of the old school in his manners; he treated his own family with some degree of ceremony,

and to his guests he shewed the most gratifying attentions : great regularity prevailed in the family over which he presided, at the same time supporting it's dignity, and solicitous to promote every rational amusement. He was not entirely averse to fashion ; and even expected his daughters to obey its dictates, so far as was not inconsistent with feminine manners ; but he had a rooted prejudice against certain modern fashionables, who assume a mixture of effrontery and singularity of manners, dress, and modes of expression ; and he particularly disliked the adoption of all cant words, or what is called *slang*.

Mrs. Ponsonby was a daughter of Lord Westhampton ; and had been accustomed from her infancy, to the best society in high life : she was of an affectionate disposition towards her family and intimate friends, among whom she was considered a most

agreeable companion ; but her general acquaintance did not scruple to say she was rather tinctured with *hauteur*.

The family at Woodsbourne at present consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Ponsonby, Louis Ponsonby, the second son, whom Elizabeth had seen at Clifton ; two of his sisters, and Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, the eldest son's wife : Octavia, the youngest daughter, was on a visit to her sister Mrs. Sunderland.

As they approached the end of their journey, Frederick gave Elizabeth some account of his family : this was delicately done, but Elizabeth had penetration enough to perceive that his remarks were intended as hints for her conduct ; she considered them as kindly meant, but wholly superfluous, and felt some degree of mortification, that, when the subject had been dropt, Frederick

should once or twice abruptly repeat some of his observations; indicating that his mind was still unsatisfied. But as she entertained a pretty good opinion of herself, and having mixed as she thought with people of the first fashion, Elizabeth was perfectly satisfied in her own mind, that she had acquired a proper degree of *ton*, and was fully persuaded she should soon convince the Ponsonby family, that though Frederick had not married his equal, in point of rank, yet so far from disgracing his choice, she must be regarded as an ornament to the sphere to which he had raised her.

With these ideas of her own consequence, Elizabeth arrived at Woodbourne. The road entered the grounds through a picturesque track of forest scenery, and Frederick was enjoying the pleasure of pointing out to her notice his

favorite views, when a bold turn in the road, brought them in full sight of the house.

Elizabeth's spirits were a little fluttered as she entered the spacious hall: Frederick pressed her hand, and led her into the evening sitting room, where the family were assembled; and the kind and flattering welcome she received, soon banished the temporary alarm of an introduction to so many strangers with whom she was now so nearly connected.

A variety of enquiries respecting their journey, and the places they had stopt to see, supplied a sufficient fund of conversation for the evening; and Elizabeth met the family at breakfast the next morning with a reassured self-confidence. She was delighted with the cheerfulness that prevailed, and highly gratified by the delicate attentions she received: they all

appeared solicitous to make her feel at home, and to banish the restraint which so frequently embarrasses persons recently introduced.

Elizabeth having admired some beautiful exotics near the window, the Miss Ponsonbys conducted her into a conservatory, adjoining the breakfast room, which was under their direction ; and as she appeared fond of flowers, they expected she would be delighted with the botanical taste in which the plants were arranged ; but Elizabeth, having no other idea of the rare plants which were here exhibited, than that some were prettier than others, contented herself with bestowing some common place observations on their beauty or eccentric growth.

The Miss Ponsonbys returned to the breakfast room, disappointed that their green-house, in which they took so much pleasure, should excite so little interest.

A walk round the grounds being proposed, Elizabeth begged that Mrs. Philip Ponsonby's daughter, an interesting child about seven years old, might be of the party ; she was fond of children, and taking a good deal of notice of Clara, the little girl attached herself to Elizabeth during the walk.

Clara was possessed of an enquiring mind, and having been encouraged in making observations on objects that excited her curiosity, she asked a variety of questions of Elizabeth.—What was the fur that trimmed her pelisse?—what country did it come from?—what sort of animal was it, and what were its habits?—How could a spider spin its web from bush to bush across the walk?—was the cone of the fir-tree, its seed, or the fruit that contained the seed?—and pointing to the moon, Clara enquired why it appeared in the morning?

Elizabeth evaded answering some of these interrogations, and asked Clara to look at a snail, and observe how it put out its horns. “*Horns!*” said the little girl, “they are its *eyes!*” As they crossed a rustic bridge, Elizabeth received further correction, for on asking Clara to look at her shadow in the water; her young companion exclaimed, “*Reflection* you mean, ’tis the sun that causes a shadow.”

The grounds were more extensive than Elizabeth had expected, and the walk occupied the chief part of the morning. The dinner was conducted with a greater degree of state than Elizabeth had ever witnessed. Mr. and Mrs. Ponsonby were particularly attentive to her; but Mr. Ponsonby’s politeness was mixed, she thought, with some degree of formality, though she soon perceived that his own

family received the same ceremonious attentions.

Some painful retrospections now crowded on Elizabeth's mind: she had felt much mortified, during Frederick's visit at Swansea, at his having been involved with persons so far beneath his own rank in life; but it was *now*, that she fully understood what his feelings must have been at witnessing scenes which formed so glaring a contrast to the society of his own family.

In the course of the evening, Clara produced a variety of things she had picked up in her morning's ramble, and though Elizabeth had told her to throw them away as they were of no use, she had persisted in bringing them home to shew her grandfather, who now proceeded to explain the nature and use of each little tuft of moss, tendril and winged seed.

Clara presently enquired of Elizabeth about the castles in Wales, and which was the finest.

“ There are so many fine old castles in Wales,” said Elizabeth, “ that that point is not very easily decided ; Conway is reckoned one of the most noted.”

“ Is that where one of our kings was born, the first that was called Prince of Wales ?”

“ I rather think not,” replied Elizabeth, “ I believe that was Carnarvon Castle.”

“ Which king was it ?”

“ I almost forget ; one of the Edwards, I believe.”

“ Edward the First ?”

“ You must look into your history of England, Clara,” said Mrs. Philip Ponsoby ; “ you must learn to inform yourself.”

Clara was fond of reading, and being always desired to ask the meaning of any word she did not understand, she appealed to the person nearest to her for information. These questions were sometimes a little embarrassing to Elizabeth ; for though the word might be perfectly familiar to her, she was not always ready with a good abstract definition.

The next morning, the family as usual were summoned to breakfast by nine o'clock ; and the same happy tempers again joined the social repast. It had been planned that this day should be devoted to a drive round the neighbourhood ; but as they were not to set out

for an hour or two, Elizabeth was introduced into a large pleasant apartment, which the Miss Ponsonbys appropriated to themselves. Here were musical instruments; an easel, and implements for painting; a book-range, and a variety of *et ceteras*, both for amusement and useful employment.

“ This is our work-room,” said Louisa, “ or lounging-room, or what you please. It is one of the many good regulations in this house, that we are all at liberty to follow our own pursuits; so here Elinor and I generally pass our mornings, and we hope you will consider this room quite at your service.’

“ Here you may study, work, draw, or amuse yourself with music,” said her sister.

“ And if a fit of idleness come on,”

cried Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, "lounge away half an hour over a novel."

Elizabeth's eyes brightened.

Mrs. Philip Ponsonby continued,—
"but you have no idea, ma'am, how ignorant these young ladies are in works of that nature; I have given them a list, which I tell them it is quite indispensable for them to read."

"We look forwards I assure you, with much pleasure to the works you have mentioned, but my father supplies us with so many new publications of a higher interest, that we must postpone for some time longer the gratification you promise us."

The carriages were now ready, and the ladies having equipped themselves for their drive, the party set out, and made a circuit of several miles through a very

pleasant country. In their way, they stopped to pay a visit to Mrs. Beaumont, in order to shew Elizabeth the admired grounds of Beaumont Lodge.

The mistress of this delightful place received them with a great deal of politeness, and appeared to take much pleasure in conducting them through the grounds.

After having seen all the varieties of shady walks, temples, hermitages, &c. the party extended their rambles to an eminence from which there was a fine prospect: they returned by a nearer way to the house, and in crossing a paddock, they met a little girl.

“How d’ye do, Mary,” said Mrs. Beaumont; “how’s your grand-mother? has she taken what I sent her?---well, I’m glad it has done her good:---now you mind and come to-morrow morning for the broth:---for I always,” continued she,

turning to Mrs. Ponsonby, "insist on my cook's saving the liquor the beef is boiled in, and by adding some pease or grits, or a little rice you know, it makes a very nourishing meal for them;—poor things, that don't get meat above once a week; and they are so thankful."

Presently they met a labourer. "Well John Wilmot," said Mrs. Beaumont, "how does your wife get on?—Ah well, we must all have our troubles; none of us without them: it's what providence sees best; and it's our duty to submit and be resigned. We mustn't expect to have every thing our own way you know."

Now John Wilmot verily and in his conscience believed that Madam Beaumont had very much of her own way; nor could he, for the life of him, understand what she had to submit to, or be

resigned about. She had a capital mansion house, with a good four thousand a year: her son was just returned member for the county, and her daughters were all well married; she enjoyed excellent health, and had only to think how she could live most to her satisfaction; and truly, it did appear to him, as far as he could see into the business, that she had every thing about her that could conduce to her comfort. She had moreover, a good house in London, and during the winter she entered into all the gaieties of a town life.

All this, John Wilmot knew from his sister, who was a housemaid in the family; but however sceptical he might be with regard to Madam Beaumont's troubles, he did not attempt to dispute the point; and Madam Beaumont, who thought that, being looked up to as the great lady of the village, she ought to

take into her consideration the spiritual as well as temporal concerns of her dependent neighbours, continued her lecture.

“ We can’t chuse for ourselves, John ; it becomes us to have a contented mind, and to be thankful for all the good things we enjoy ; and I hope you attended to what our good parson said last Sunday : we must bear with a proper spirit the afflictions that Providence sees good for us : ’tis all ordered for the best ; short-sighted mortals as we are, (John cast a look at Madam Beaumont’s eye-glass,) we know not what is good for us : but if we live well, we know we shall die in peace.”

As to her dying in peace, that, John Wilmot could not pretend to answer for ; but as to her *living well*, it was his private opinion that nobody could live

better ; and to his certain knowledge there was, at that moment in Madam's kitchen, a sumptuous dinner in preparation. Whatever his secret thoughts were, however, John knew enough of the world, to understand that it was his place to be humble, and thankful for Madam's advice, broth, and condescension.

Elizabeth was delighted with all she had seen ; and after taking leave of Mrs. Beaumont, she spoke of every thing with rapture. "What an elegant house!" she cried, "beautiful dressing-room Mrs. Beaumont's is---every thing about her so tasteful---so much fancy and elegance---and such a charming woman---so good she appears to be."

Mrs. Ponsonby and her daughters were willing to give Mrs. Beaumont all the praise she merited ; but they well

knew that with her ample fortune, it was in her power to do a vast deal more good :—that what she did, was without trouble or personal inconvenience ; that she always made the most of it, and never let slip any opportunity of advertising her good deeds to the world.

CHAP. II.

A SUCCESSION of fine weather was now interrupted by a gloomy sky, and Elizabeth and the Miss Ponsonbys, after taking a stroll round the lawn were driven into the house by a shower of rain, and they proceeded to the library.

“ Well,” said Elinor, “ here we shall be in no want of amusement : let the weather do its worst, we have still, ‘ the feast of reason and the flow of soul.’ ”

“ And where,” added Louisa, “ can you have a feast, at so short a notice !

all tastes are here accommodated : here's something of everything, and the best of its kind ; theology, history, politics, biography, poetry, and miscellaneous subjects *ad infinitum* ; so we have only to make a selection according to our varying humours : and as my mind has taken a tint corresponding with this sombre morning, I shall indulge in Tasso."

" You ought rather to select a more lively author, by way of antidote," returned Elinor.

" True, but I have opened at,

‘ Io son Clorinda, disse ; hai forse intesa
Talor namarmi ;’

and proceed I must."

" Well, while you and Clorinda interest yourselves in the fate of the captive christians, I will pay my devoirs to Doctors Gall and Spurzheim, and en-

deavour to ascertain whether I have brains enough to understand them."

"What do you think of this new theory?" said Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, addressing Elizabeth; "don't you think it very absurd?"

"That is a leading question;" cried Elinor; "I protest against it."

"I will put it again then, without favor or affection; are you, or are you not an advocate for craniology?"

"Upon my word," replied Elizabeth, with some embarrassment, "I have not heard much of the subject."

"Elinor, then, will be delighted to impart all the information she possesses, which is of no very limited extent, if I may judge from the voluminous correspondence between her and Octavia; for my own part, I'm disposed

to treat this wonderful science as a fanciful speculation.”

“ Because you will not give yourself the trouble of listening to a fair statement of facts—.”

“ I cry you mercy, good Elinor ; did I not, with the most meritorious perseverance, keep my countenance a full half hour, while you so ably expounded the doctrine, and assaulted me with a phalanx of proofs ? I must say I think its a little hard, after having all my life piqued myself on possessing a small head, to discover that it argues a deficiency of intellect ; it is not a very persuasive inducement to make a convert of me.”

“ You will not do justice to the subject : you seem determined to let prejudice have its sway. Every innovation of received principles startles us at first, and before the persevering labours of philoso-

phers, are rewarded with the conviction of the multitude. The discoverer of the circulation of the blood, perhaps, experienced as much difficulty in establishing the theory which immortalized his name, as these extraordinary physiologists of our own times."

" You must recollect, Elinor, that at the period you allude to, physiology may be considered to have been in its infancy, whereas now, the world is become so enlightened by the astonishing discoveries in chemistry, and other sciences, that novelty has to contend with the matured judgment of the present age; and that unwillingness to adopt a new system, which in past ages we regard as a mark of ignorance, is in us a commendable caution."

" I very much doubt," returned Elinor, " whether the philosophers in after times

will consider us as having discarded our leading strings; though I flatter myself the science which you now hold so cheap, will be the rallying point of future discoveries."

"Speed then this illumined age," cried Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, "when this renowned science will have attained to perfection. I presume, in that enlightened era, a master will require no character in hiring a servant, but engage him on the faith of his front; a lady will think it a requisite preliminary to examine her lover's skull before she accepts him, and an innocent wretch suspected of murder will be hanged, drawn, and quartered, without judge or jury, if the organ of destructiveness be discovered in his unfortunate pericranium!"

"Since you condescend to call in the aid of ridicule, the *pis aller* of an argu-

ment, I shall entertain some hopes of you: extremes are apt to meet, and I shall soon have to hail you as a staunch craniologist."

The ladies were interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Ponsonby, who had returned from a ride; and Louisa requested him to shew Elizabeth his cabinet of curiosities.

Mr. Ponsonby readily complied; and one drawer after another was produced. Minerals were the first specimens. To Elizabeth, nothing could be more uninteresting: she had no knowledge of the subject; and was frequently at a loss to understand what they were talking about: she contrived however, to take some suitable notice of the specimens before her, by borrowing a few hints from their preceding remarks.

On the appearance of a drawer of shells, her powers of utterance were more at liberty. Thesè she could look at for ever: she had copied shells, and could tell the names of some of them. “What beautiful colours!” she exclaimed; “how elegantly marked, and what a variety of forms!” but her volubility in praise of the shells, only served to make her solemn and parsimonious admiration of the minerals the more striking.

A series of coins, and some curious medals, commemorating important events in history, were also shewn. Elizabeth had seen coins and medals before, but had always regarded them as very great curiosities, on account of their antiquity alone; they were now introduced to her in a new light, and were prized not only for their venerable appearance, which she had begun rather extravagantly to extol, but as forming a chronological tablet.

Elizabeth checked the praise she was beginning to bestow on their excellent preservation, &c. and looked with some alarm towards a drawer which was next opened: she could form no idea of the nature of its contents, and was thankful to find Mr. Ponsonby passed over this, without requiring her sentiments. “We will take another opportunity to look at these fossil bones,” said he, “when we have more time to examine them, and to refer to Parkinson’s “Organic Remains:” you would rather see the gems, I dare say.”

The idea of ornamental jewellery so far predominated in Elizabeth’s mind, that though she did not absolutely expect to see ear-rings and necklaces, she exclaimed, “Oh yes, I should like to see the gems; rather more in a lady’s way, you know:” she was not a little disappointed, however, at their appearance:

they were genuine antiques; and Elizabeth understood little of the matter.

In the evening, the conversation turned on the books they had been reading; and Mr. Ponsonby hoped she had met with something in his library worth her attention.

“It was impossible to be otherwise;” replied Elizabeth; “I took up a volume of Shakspeare, and that, you know, is always sure to gratify.”

“Yes,” observed Mrs. Ponsonby, “that great painter of the human mind never fails to delight and instruct.”

“What a finely drawn character is Pierre!” said Elizabeth.

“Pierre! I don’t recollect that name in Shakspeare; what play were you reading?”

“ Venice Preserved.”

“ But that is by Otway ;”—said Mrs. Philip Ponsonby.

“ Oh yes,” said Elizabeth ; “ true ; I thought at first it was one of Shakspeare’s ; something like his style, I believe.”

“ You had the Merchant of Venice in your head,” said Frederick, “ that bewildered you—.”

“ Yes, I was thinking of the Merchant of Venice ;—puzzled me a little.”

An embarrassing pause followed for a few seconds ; which Louisa interrupted, by asking Mrs. Philip Ponsonby what she thought of Wordsworth’s new Poem.

“ It’s a fine thing, certainly ;—*you*

consider it, I believe, as placing him in the first class of genius. I cannot entirely agree with you ; though there are undoubtedly some highly poetic passages.”

This led to a long, and to the parties concerned, a very interesting discussion. The Miss Ponsonbys, who were extremely well read in general literature, and particularly conversant with the poets, entered with spirit into the argument, taking a wide survey of the comparative merits of various authors. All this was perfectly new to Elizabeth, who feeling her inferiority in matters of literature, offered no opinion ; but as the parties in dispute frequently turned to her, seeking another advocate, she was obliged to suit her face to the occasion, and appear to enter into the discussion ; and every minute dreading that one side or the other would make a direct appeal

to her, to strengthen their arguments, she endeavoured to prepare herself for some safe observation. The trial came : but a precipitate acquiescence was all she could summon to her aid, and her face had now to burn with shame, as she was asked to explain her reasons. Elizabeth had none to explain : she had readily given her assent to the question put to her, in hopes of evading further inquiry ; but now, here was a direct appeal to her judgment ; the whole party paused to hear her decision. Frederick bit his lips, and took up a newspaper ; while Elizabeth, with some confusion, affected to have misunderstood the point, and begged to leave it in better hands : she felt much mortified, and perceived a certain glance pass between the Miss Ponsonbys, of so minute a nature, that nothing but suspicion could have detected it.

“ It must remain a drawn battle then, I believe,” said Mrs. Philip Ponsonby; “ neither side seems inclined to yield.”

“ *You* seem inclined to make a retreat, I perceive,” said Elinor; “ therefore, as I mean to keep possession of the field, the victory is ours.”

“ By no means; I am quite prepared to renew the attack:” and the subject was again canvassed. Other new publications were talked of; and Mrs. Ponsonby asked Elizabeth whether she had read a work which was then much in request: she had not; but assuming courage, observed she wished very much to get a sight of it; though, in fact, she had never before heard of the book. Little did she think of the task she had imposed on herself. It was a tolerably thick quarto: she was immediately promised the perusal of it, and was now asked

whether she admired the author's works in general, and *which* she preferred.

Elizabeth did not even know the author's name; but endeavouring to evade a disclosure of her ignorance, replied, she really could not determine, but when she had read his last performance, she should be a better judge.

There was something in the manner of this, that led the Miss Ponsonbys to guess the truth, and the subject was suddenly turned: Elizabeth felt it was out of compassion. She comforted herself with thinking, that she might regain their good opinion when an opportunity offered of exhibiting some of her accomplishments. She had always found that her singing was much admired; she played too, she thought, very well; her drawings had been considered *chef d'œuvres*; and

in dancing she feared no competitor : she felt too, that she did know something of books, but having reason to suspect she did not know as much as she ought, she sought safety in silence.

CHAP. III.

THE following day, Mr. and Mrs. Dudley, who were on an intimate footing with the Ponsonby family, dined at Woodsbourne; they brought with them their niece, Miss Vicars; and Elizabeth found them very agreeable people. They had lately been in town, and had much to communicate, which was highly interesting to all parties. Mr. Dudley had attended the House of Commons during a very important debate, and had mixed a great deal with the leading characters in the political circles: Mr. Philip Ponsonby having been one of the speakers on the

question, all the family were eager to hear every thing that Mr. Dudley had to say on the subject.

Elizabeth supposed all this might, by possibility, be amusing ; but she lent a much more attentive ear to Mrs. Dudley, whose descriptions of the parties she had been at, quite fascinated her.

“ Were you at that grand ball, Ma’am,” inquired Elizabeth, “ that was given by Mrs. Richmond? I saw a long account of it in the papers; it must have been a most elegant entertainment.”

“ I just looked in;” said Mrs. Dudley: “ ’twas immensely crowded: the papers puffed it off in the most extravagant manner;—indeed, I think it is at select parties that one really enjoys what at crowded assemblies is only talked of.”

“ There is a lamentable sameness,” observed Mrs. Ponsonby, “ in all those scenes: rooms splendidly furnished, filled with a well dressed mob; the same faces over and over again; no place to rest; torrid zone,—and glad to get to your carriage without an accident.”

“ Mrs. Richmond has begun but a short time to lead,” continued Mrs. Dudley, “ and of course she must keep it up. Your daughter Lady Kingsbury’s, was the pleasantest and best conducted affair I have seen a long time. Mrs. Hervey Laxton’s parties have been very attractive: she has had lectures on chemistry at her house; and French plays, which were very well performed.”

“ A charming woman is Mrs. Hervey Laxton;” said Louis Ponsonby; “ I met her brother at Clifton; he has a great

talent for painting, and shewed me some beautiful views he had taken."

" I was much struck with Clifton," said Louisa; " the prospects are superior to any thing we can boast of in this neighbourhood. There is some fine river scenery;—did you take any sketches, Elizabeth?"

" Indeed, I'm ashamed to say, I had really no time for drawing; I was with Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke, and we saw so much company, and racketted about so, that it put every thing else out of one's head."

" That was unfortunate," said Mr. Ponsonby.

" It must have been very annoying to you;" said Louisa; " nothing is so pro-

voking as to have one's occupations broken in upon."

" Oh yes ;" was Elizabeth's reply ; but she felt that it was not very unlike " Oh no."

" We have heard a great deal of Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke ;" said Louisa.

" She is a very particular friend of mine ;" cried Elizabeth, with an air of exultation ; " I wish you could see her ; she's a very elegant woman ; quite a dasher."

" So I have heard :—and Mr. Bolingbroke is in the whip-club, I believe ;" said Miss Ponsonby, in a tone of concern.

" Oh yes ; and they live in such capital style ! every thing so well appointed :

they had a famous new carriage from town just before I left Clifton; a most *knowing set-out* !”

“ I am afraid,” said Mr. Ponsonby, “ that young man will give his family a great deal of trouble.”

“ It must require a large fortune to support their establishment :” observed Frederick ; “ he has a complete stud ; and they live in a most expensive manner.”

“ They are very young people,” said Mr. Ponsonby, “ and have not yet learnt that there is a possibility of happiness without extravagance.”

“ She had a good fortune, I understand ;” observed Mr. Dudley ; “ but I fancy they are going the right road to spend it.”

“ How often it happens,” said Mrs. Ponsonby, “ that persons with very considerable incomes are tempted to make a display at watering places, affecting to be of great consequence, till an accumulation of debts checks their career, and precipitates them into insignificance; when, with a prudent regulation of their property, they might have kept up a respectable appearance in the first circles.”

“ Yes, that’s every thing;” vaguely observed Elizabeth; “ and I’m sure it is not at all necessary to one’s happiness to be always dashing about; a little quiet living gives a greater zest to gaieties at other times.”

“ The misfortune is,” said Mrs. Ponsonby, “ that with some people, a taste for dissipation engrosses so large a portion of their time as to leave no interval for any rational pursuit.”

Miss Vicars took a seat next to Elizabeth, and mentioned that she was lately come from Bath, where she had frequently seen Mrs. Bolingbroke. One connecting link is sufficient to attach congenial minds: Elizabeth and Miss Vicars were intimate friends in a moment. Miss Vicars was well stored with Bath news, and finding a ready listener, began pouring out a torrent of intelligence. Elizabeth was delighted to hear what was going on in that little world of fashion, and thrown off her guard by the encouraging freedom of Miss Vicars, she chimed in with her in a manner she was afterwards sorry for.

“ Did you know Miss Abdy? she is just married to Captain Hewett,” said Miss Vicars; “ she was a great deal with Mrs. Bolingbroke at Bath.”

“ No;” said Elizabeth; “ but I remem-

ber Harriet's saying Miss Abdy was going to be married to Sir William Chalmers."

"Oh she has been *going* to be married to a hundred people: she's such a flirt! Captain Hewett got into a sad scrape just before his marriage: he had a black eye at the wedding; and we heard he had been fighting with the waiters at the York House the evening before."

"What a *row* it must have made!" said Elizabeth, laughing: "quite a *kick-up*."

"Her father broke off the match at one time," continued Miss Vicars; "owing, it was said, to Hewett's not making a proper settlement: there was no other objection, I believe."

"I should think not;" said Elizabeth;

“ he is such an elegant handsome man—but Sir William Chalmers would have been a better *catch*.”

“ Yes; Hewett let himself down very much by that quarrel.”

“ It could have afforded no very agreeable prospect for the lady, I should think,” observed Miss Ponsonby.

“ Oh she has a great deal of spirit;” returned Miss Vicars, laughing; “ and those sort of things are not much thought of in Bath.”

“ Did you visit Mrs. Bolingbroke?” inquired Elizabeth.

“ No; we were not at all acquainted: Mamma did not like her: she thought her rather too much of a dasher; but

she seemed to be a very charming woman."

" You would have been delighted with her, I'm sure;" cried Elizabeth; " there's so much life and spirit about her, and she's so good tempered."

" She dresses very elegantly—."

" Yes, she is very extravagant in that way. She has been amazingly admired, and has had so many offers! she kept a list at one time."

" I should have liked to have been at a ball that she gave;" said Miss Vicars; " I heard it was a very gay affair; something in the masquerade style. It was kept up 'till eight o'clock; and then they had a breakfast:—and 'twas said Charles Cosby drove Mrs. Bolingbroke in his tilbury down Pulteney-street at nine

in the morning, in their masquerade dresses."

"She always enjoyed a frolic," said Elizabeth: "I saw Mr. Cosby once, at a Clifton ball; but he had dined with a party at the hotel, and appeared to be very much *cut*. He is said to be a most agreeable man—when he's sober, which is not very often the case, I believe;" continued she, laughing. "I should have liked to have known more of him; there is certainly something extremely elegant about him—quite a *Love*; as Mrs. Bolingbroke would say."

"She is very whimsical, isn't she? I have heard she makes such odd remarks upon people. She called Sir James Elwyn, who is singularly tall and thin, *a fishing-rod of a man*:—and ridiculed Miss Bertha Collins's profusion of flaxen hair, by calling it a *hay-cock head*."

“ That is so like her !” said Elizabeth.

“ At Mrs. Crawford’s ball she made herself very remarkable;” continued Miss Vicars; “ she was asked to dance by Major Kelly, and she told him it was impossible she could stand up with the proprietor of such an inveterate pug nose! Her vanity too, was not a little noticed; she was sitting down, when several ladies were standing before her, and she requested them to move aside, as they prevented her being seen: but the highest thing was, there was a blind harper among the band, who played inimitably, and Mrs. Bolingbroke said she had only one objection to him; there was one man the less to look at her.”

Miss Ponsonby presumed it was a Bath story.

“ You must not believe every thing

that is said of her;" cried Elizabeth; "reports are so exaggerated; especially of a person of some notoriety."

"Oh yes;" said Miss Vicars; "and it was made out that she said she never gave routs, because ladies' company was so tiresome. Tattle is the staple commodity of Bath. There was a good story of Mrs. Finch: she had gone to all the parties without making any return, but at last she sent out cards, and nothing was talked of but Mrs. Finch's ball and supper, which was to surpass every thing of the kind: three days before, however, a put-off was sent round on account of the death of a relation;---Mrs. Finch went into deep mourning, and had all the credit of her gala, though her deceased relative had never been in existence; she has ever since gone by the name of Mrs. *Flinch*. Then there was Mrs. Powis, who gave mutton sandwiches at one of

her parties, and the young men went *bawling* about the room; so ridiculous! they christened her Mrs. Mutton Powis! There was *such* a dispute between her and Lady Carter about the Harmonic tickets; it came to absolute abuse."

" You have drawn a very good sketch of Bath," observed Miss Ponsonby, " but how extremely unpleasant it must be, to reside in a place where animadversion on the conduct of others is so general."

" But they deserve it all; and in such a throng, it is a wonder there are not more odd people.—Oh! I am very fond of Bath,—such gaiety! I am sorry the cotillon balls are falling off; we used to have such a delightful set; the Miss Lesterhays, and Bertha Collins, and some very choice men; Mr. Latoysonere, the best dancer in Bath, was in

our set ; and Colonel Brookes, Cyrus O'Beirne, and Mr. Gore. The Miss Lesterhays were very much in fashion ; there was another just come out before I left Bath ; she is reckoned very pretty, —quite a gentleman's beauty. Susan Lesterhays was reported to be engaged to Mr. ———, the most eminent puppy in Bath ; and Caroline to Mr. Benson, better known by the name of *Look-and-sigh* : he was ridiculous enough ; but *Look-and-die*, and *Look-and-expire*, were far too sublime."

" Ah, let us hear what you have to say of the gentlemen ;" said Elizabeth ; " if the ladies afford so much amusement, I don't doubt but the gentlemen equally contribute specimens of the ridiculous."

" Yes, they are a sad set,—so conceited ! I've no patience with them. I

am afraid their characters will not bear investigation ; so I wont meddle with such a dangerous topic. Oh, here's Mr. Louis Ponsonby ; now let us quiz him a little."

" I fear you are making a bad report of us, Miss Vicars ; but I hope you will allow that there are some exceptions," said Louis Ponsonby.

" Certainly ; I've a glimpse of a capital one ; just six feet high. But, indeed, I don't know that I can let you off so easily, for there is a sad story against you ;—quite shocking !"

" This is really an alarming attack ;. but I am unconscious of ——"

" Oh ! you must be aware that you left a certain fair lady in a pitiable state ; —quite *au desespoir*."

“ I stayed so short a time in Bath, that —— ”

“ Long enough to do an immensity of mischief.”

“ I am quite at a loss to understand you.”

“ Indeed ! what, you never heard of such a person as Miss Warwick ? nor ever paid her particular attentions ? Come, we must bring you more to the point. After commencing the siege in the usual way,—dancing with her every other set, beau-ing her to the Theatre, parading the Crescent with her every morning, &c. &c. and practising all the eighteen manœuvres ; just as the citadel was about to surrender, you sounded a retreat in a most unheard of manner.”

“ Upon my word I am the most

peaceable man on earth :—but you condemn me without judge or jury.”

“ Well, I am ready to hear your defence : what does the indictment say ? —Louis Ponsonby, of Woodsbourne, in the county of Essex, Esquire, stands arraigned for the capital offence of feloniously purloining a lady’s heart. Pray, did you, or did you not, in a cold frosty day in November last, pace up and down Laura Place for a full hour and a half ? Ah ! you can’t deny it ; I see you have nothing to say for yourself ; your looks plead guilty.”

“ You are a little too hard upon him, Miss Vicars ;” said Frederick ; “ it is what we call browbeating.”

“ You have no right to speak ; you have no retainer, Sir ;” returned Miss Vicars ; “ allow me to proceed with the

case. Upon cross examination, I think it will appear that the prisoner absconded without due notice, and was seen lurking about at Clifton."

"What have you to say to that?" said Elizabeth; "you certainly were at Clifton; that *I* can vouch for."

"That this forlorn damsel," continued Miss Vicars, "has worn the willow ever since, and is going fast into a love consumption."

Louis Ponsonby pleaded not guilty.

"What a pretty innocent look!" exclaimed Miss Vicars; "well, I was determined to plague you a little about your quondam dulcinea; but to ease your conscience, I must confess that she has begun a violent flirtation with Charles Cosby."

“ This is excellent news, but really my conscience has been by no means troublesome ;—I felt perfectly comfortable.”

“ Oh you men have no consciences ! you’re barbarous creatures ! but I would have you take care ; remember the old story of the moth and the candle. By the by, did you hear of Captain Selwyn’s three falls ? he fell down with his horse, fell out with his colonel, and fell in love with his cousin, all in one day ; and has been every morning *sedan’d* up Milsom Street to pay his addresses to her.”

The volubility of Miss Vicars was arrested by Mr. Dudley’s carriage being announced, which Elizabeth regarded as a cruel interruption to a detail so highly attractive ; for notwithstanding the persons alluded to were for the most part unknown to her, yet the anecdotes re-

lated by Miss Vicars were so much in unison with her own taste, that she regarded her as a most fascinating young woman. After she was gone, Elizabeth observed to Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, what an agreeable companion Miss Vicars must be to her aunt. "She is very lively, certainly; but I am afraid rather too trifling a character to suit Mrs. Dudley;" was the chilling reply.

She's a pleasanter woman than you, though; thought Elizabeth.

CHAP. IV.

THE next evening, music became the attraction, and as the Miss Ponsonbys understood that Elizabeth was possessed of musical talents, they requested to hear her sing. Elizabeth faintly excused herself, and then turning to Frederick, asked what she should sing?

“ Any thing you like,—‘ Love among the Roses.’ ”

Elizabeth thought that would give a poor specimen of her abilities, and said,

“ shall I sing ‘ O dolce concento,’ or,
‘ Che dice mal d’amore?’ ”

Frederick still called for ‘ Love among the Roses,’ but his sisters over-ruled his choice, and Elizabeth attempted one of Catalani’s favourite songs. She had naturally a very sweet voice, and really sang ballads with some taste ; but having unfortunately taken up an idea that it was more fashionable to sing Italian, she was weak enough to relinquish the merit she really possessed, for the poor ambition of singing difficult songs, for which her voice was by no means calculated : consequently, she sang the air with very little effect : she had not recollected when she sat down, that it had been several months since she had last sung it ; and not understanding Italian, she was far from correct in her pronunciation. The Miss Ponsonbys, however, gave her a great deal of

credit: the words of the air were then spoken of, and as they appeared to be quite at home in the language, Elizabeth felt the folly of her attempting to sing what she did not understand: she guessed Frederick's motive for recommending an English ballad, and resolved to pay more attention to his hints in future.

The Miss Ponsonbys played a duet of Mozart's, and Louisa sang, "Ye sacred Priests," with a taste and execution scarcely inferior to any professional singer.

The contrast between this beautiful song, and her own murdered bravura, painfully tingled in Elizabeth's ear: she now longed to sing, "Love among the Roses," but after the solemn grandeur of Handel, she thought it would appear insignificant.

Elizabeth was now requested to play : she was very much out of practice, she said, and could not recollect any piece of music without her books ; feeling, however, rather *au fait* in country dances, she said she would try a waltz : —it was pretty ; and encouraged by the praise bestowed, she proceeded to play all her favourite dances.

The instrument was accustomed to produce nothing but the most scientific strains ; and Mrs. Philip Ponsonby whispered to Louisa, that she was afraid the piano would feel very much affronted ; that for her part, she thought it sacrilege. The Miss Ponsonbys, however, were really much pleased, and begged Elizabeth to give them the notes of two or three of the dances. Elizabeth readily promised, as she had brought some of her music with her ; but as her eye glanced upon some beautiful manu-

script music of the Miss Ponsonbys, she longed to excuse herself, conscious that she wrote music very indifferently.

Every day seemed to bring with it some fresh mortification, and Elizabeth's good sense made her feel conscious that the humiliations she suffered were not occasioned by any fault she could impute to her husband's family, but solely to the inferiority of her own talents.

Having noticed an oil-painting, she admired it very much, and ventured to pronounce that it must have been done by some very great master ; but she learnt to her infinite surprize that it was painted by the youngest Miss Ponsonby.

“ Octavia does every thing well ;” said Louisa ; “ you will be much pleased

with her ; she is a favourite with every one."

" Have you ever attempted any thing in oils ?" inquired Elinor.

" Oh no ;" replied Elizabeth ; who considered the question the same as, " have you ever built a house ?"—" I draw a little ;" she added, " and it would give me much pleasure to see your portfolio ; you promised me a sight of it."

She was now shewn some beautiful drawings in a masterly style, exhibiting a variety of scenery, and the picturesque effect of different seasons, weather, and climate : how totally unlike any of Elizabeth's !—the description of one of her's will afford some idea of the others. A dark foreground, with a stiff tree or two ; a broad sheet of water,—neither sea, lake, nor river, into which projects

a woody mount with a non-descript building on the top ; distant hills and a hot sky ;—perhaps a tiny fisherman on the foreground.

Elizabeth had played and sung before the Miss Ponsonbys, and her performance had sunk to nothing in comparison with their superior skill. She had acknowledged to them that she drew a little ; she had said “ a little,” out of modesty, for she had, till now, been accustomed to regard her drawings with considerable self-applause ; and had often exhibited them with triumph to her admiring friends at Swansea : but on seeing the specimens now produced, she felt shocked at her own conceit. She seemed to have suddenly acquired a correct taste ; and *she* who had laughed and sneered at the paltry daubs, by way of drawings, done by others, had now to feel how contemptible her own would

appear in company with the exquisite landscapes of the Miss Ponsonbys : all her own well-remembered ridicule came ready made into her mind, as applicable to her most admired pieces. She was resolved that nothing should induce her to attempt a drawing while she was at Woodsbourne ; and was thankful that sundry once-prized landscapes, that appeared like spectres haunting her mental eye, were invisible to all besides ; to say nothing of her gaudy shells, surrounded by sprawling coral, and sea-weed, blue, green, and red.

Elizabeth was now copying, with the utmost care, the dances the Miss Ponsonbys had asked for, and being called suddenly away, thoughtlessly left her music-book on the table. On her return she found the Miss Ponsonbys looking over it."

“ Oh, pray don’t,” said Elizabeth ;
“ they are not worth looking at, and so
badly written.”

“ You have great variety here,” was
all Miss Ponsonby could say in their
commendation ; for, on opening the
book, had appeared, in heterogeneous
succession, “ Tarry a-while with me, my
love ;”—“ Nel cor piu ;”—“ White
cockade ;”—Overture to Lodoiska, un-
finished ;—“ God save the King,” badly
set ;—“ Won’t you, Mr. Mug ;”—“ Morn-
ing Hymn ;”—“ Captain Wattle and Miss
Roe ;”—with several of the *inferior*
productions of Mr. M——, all written in
a slovenly style.

With some embarrassment Elizabeth
resumed her employment : she took
especial care that the book should never
again make its appearance.

It was soon observable to the Miss Ponsonbys, that though, in a certain circle, Elizabeth might have acquired a reputation for accomplishments, yet that in reality, her mind was very scantily furnished with useful information. They were uniformly attentive, but avoided entangling her in conversation not suited to her talents: they seldom asked her opinion on a subject of importance, though they never failed to refer to her whenever a question of dress or equipage was started.

A politeness to her led them seldom to talk of books, except in a general way, but as Elizabeth was now wading through the thick quarto, she had "so much wished to get sight of," Louisa could not refrain from inquiring how she liked it.

"Oh, very much indeed."

“ ’Tis extremely interesting,” said Miss Ponsonby; “ and I found it much more entertaining on a second perusal.”

Elizabeth found it no easy matter to get *once* through the volume, and had no intention of favouring herself with a second dose.

Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, wishing to introduce a subject which might be familiar to Elizabeth, inquired whether she had read a novel that had lately been published, which had acquired a character above the ordinary level. Elizabeth had the book by heart, and began an animated discussion of its merits: she thought the heroine’s character very interesting, and the account of her distress extremely affecting; she pitied her separation from her lover,

and marvelled at the cruelty of her relations.

Mrs. Philip Ponsonby disagreed with her ; she had never met with so unnatural a character as the heroine's : as to her distresses, she really thought them ludicrous ; her inattention to the good advice of her family was very reprehensible ; and her love for such a man as Delamore quite unpardonable.

Elizabeth turned to the right-about and observed, that his conduct certainly had not been correct, but that a good heart compensated for many indiscretions.

“ But his behaviour to Rosalinde was so ungentlemanly—”

“ True, it was very inexcusable ; and

to be sure, it *was* unnatural that she should quit her uncle's house, where she was so kindly received."

"Well, that struck me as the most noble trait in her character; she found she was supplanting her cousin in the affections of a gentleman who had been previously attached to her, and rather than interfere with her happiness, she sought another asylum."

"True," again replied Elizabeth.

"There are many striking passages," continued Mrs. Philip Ponsonby; "and some touches of humour: the follies of the Bazely family—"

"Yes, the account of their gaiety," interrupted Elizabeth, "was very entertaining; how natural that was about

the ball given when young Bazely came of age, and the manœuvres of the Miss Bazelys—”

“ What I chiefly admired in the book, was, its moral tendency, in which many of those works are so deficient.”

“ Did not you think the part where Delamore pays his addresses to Miss Bazely very droll?” said Elizabeth; “ and her being so completely taken in as to believe he was in earnest.”

“ That Delamore was a most contemptible character; and I should hope that of Miss Bazely is without a prototype; she let herself down so deplorably; it would be really mortifying to imagine there could be such a woman.”

“ It would indeed: ’twas too bad.”

“ The character of Mrs. Almscant,” continued Mrs. Philip Ponsonby, “ is very well drawn. It reminded me of a lady in town who wished to obtain the credit of a charitable disposition on the most reasonable terms. Having gained her point, she suspected every unknown visitor of having a design upon her purse. A clergyman called upon her, intimating that he came upon a little money-matter. She scanned him from head to foot, and looked as if she thought half-a-crown would do. “ It is a singular case,” said he, “ and I’m sure, from what I have heard of your benevolence, will very much interest your feelings.” Her freezing looks bespoke her apprehension that a guinea was expected. “ You remember the Woodwards,” said Mr. Arnold. “ Oh, those Woodwards,” she exclaimed fretfully, “ were always the greatest beggars in the world. I made a vow I

never would do any thing for them again; they are never contented with what one does; it all goes for nothing. At different times, I am sure, I've given them above two pounds; and, the last time the woman called, she wanted me to lend her five guineas! very encroaching."—Mr. Arnold replied, "they were more fortunate in their application elsewhere. This little assistance freed them from immediate embarrassment, revived the husband's exhausted energies, and enabled him to procure employment: his good conduct entitled him to higher wages, and he began laying by a part of his hard earnings. They are very far from forgetting your bounty, Madam: you will find, I believe, an accurate account of it in this paper, and I am commissioned to repay you the amount, with their grateful acknowledgments." The lady's features had gradually begun

to thaw ; and, after some suitable commendation of the poor man's industry, she pocketted the cash, observing, " that the numberless demands made on her for charity, would soon draw it out again."

CHAP. V.

SOME particular friends of the Ponsonby family, were now expected to pay a short visit at Woodsbourne.

Mr. and Lady Harriet Carrol, the Honourable Mr. Ormsby and Major Arlington, Elizabeth assured herself would greatly enliven the family party. With the name of Harriet, was associated all the gaiety of her friend Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke; in Mr. Carrol, she anticipated a lively Irishman, and Major Arlington and Mr. Ormsby, she was certain were

dashing men of fashion. She was not long under any misapprehension: Lady Harriet was of a very opposite character to that of Elizabeth's volatile friend. Mrs. Ponsonby dwelt with much delight on the virtues of this excellent young woman. She was the daughter of the Earl of Clarencourt, and with the advantages of beauty and accomplishments, had been introduced into company at an early age, when the gaieties of life are most attractive: her immediate connexions formed a circle of fashionables, whose parties were distinguished for their splendour and dissipation: yet Lady Harriet's natural good sense taught her to regard the dazzling scenes before her, as mere empty pleasures, from which no satisfactory reflection could be derived. Her mother's health making a country residence desirable, Lady Harriet cheerfully relinquished all the gaieties of a town life, and entirely devoted herself

to the Countess. In the country numerous were the opportunities of exercising her benevolent disposition. Her example was followed by persons of fortune in the neighbourhood, and Lady Harriet had the gratification of being, not only the immediate dispenser of relief herself, but the promoter of charity in others: her rank now acquired a new importance, and she was forcibly impressed with the responsibility that attaches to the great, whose influence pervades all degrees of society.

Lady Clarencourt's restored health proved the reward of her daughter's anxious cares; and though solicited again to join the circle of which she had been the brightest ornament, Lady Harriet persevered in preferring the rational amusements of life to its splendid follies. Soon after her marriage with Mr. Carrol, an Irish gentleman, of exemplary cha-

racter, she accompanied him to Ireland, where he had extensive estates; and while he was engaged in diffusing agricultural improvement among his tenantry, his amiable wife was actively employed in ameliorating the condition of the poorer class.

The Honourable Mr. Ormsby was a young man of high literary reputation, and had particularly distinguished himself by his recondite researches: his friend Major Arlington was a profound oriental scholar, who, during his residence in India, had prosecuted the most diligent investigation of remote antiquity.

What a blank to Elizabeth, were these panegyrics! putting to flight all the gay evening parties her creative fancy had been arranging: with a houseful of company she had always connected, dancing, theatricals, masquerades, and all sorts of

festivities : she now looked forward with very little pleasure to the society of the expected guests, but as an elegant travelling carriage stopped, she could not resist running to her dressing-room window ; Mr. Carrol and Lady Harriet alighted. Mr. Ormsby and Major Arlington arrived in the course of the day, having made a circuit in the neighbourhood, in order to trace an antient Roman way.

When Elizabeth joined the party in the drawing-room, Lady Harriet was giving an account of an institution she had established on Mr. Carrol's estate ; the Miss Ponsonbys were much interested in the subject, and were taking notes.

The extreme beauty of her Ladyship, and her graceful manners, could not fail of pre-possessing every one in her favour ; Elizabeth was particularly struck with

her appearance, and felt awed by the dignity of her character.

In the evening, Mr. Ponsonby produced some curious illuminated missals, which for some time occupied the attention of his friends. The conversation afterwards turned on various interesting topics: Major Arlington's particular pursuits in India, had given him an insight into the singular customs of the different Hindoo castes, and he related some remarkable facts, of which he was an eye-witness. Mr. Ormsby, who had lately made a tour through antient Greece, was enabled, from his minute observations on that classic ground, to throw considerable light on some doubtful points in history.

The ladies, with the exception of Elizabeth, found their curiosity too highly excited, not to prompt inquiry and remark.

Elizabeth began to feel that her taciturnity must appear somewhat singular; and rather than remain entirely silent; she asked Major Arlington, who sat near her, whether he was acquainted with a Mr. Thompson in India. Major Arlington politely intimated, that in so extensive a country it was necessary that the place of residence should be specified. Elizabeth immediately felt the folly of her question, and observed, she rather thought it was Calcutta.

“Thompson,” repeated Major Arlington, “Thompson;—yes; I recollect the name; he had an appointment in the civil service?”

Elizabeth believed he might.

Major Arlington looked a little serious: “have you any particular reasons,

Ma'am," said he, " for making the inquiry ;—is he a friend of yours ?"

" Oh no, not particularly."

" I may then mention, without the fear of hurting your feelings, that his conduct has been such, as to occasion his been shunned in society."

" Oh I know very little of him," said Elizabeth colouring, conscious of the inconsistency of asking after a person of whom she had so little knowledge.

Elizabeth again relapsed into silence ; but in the course of the evening, she ventured to address Lady Harriet, and concluded her remark with a common-place French phrase. Her ladyship returned a playful observation in the same language ; which Elizabeth would have understood in writing, but the Parisian pronunciation of Lady Harriet was so unlike

Elizabeth's school-french, that she could only guess at its import: she was grateful to Mrs. Ponsonby, whose reply saved her credit, though she felt it must have appeared very like helping a lame dog over the stile.

She was perplexed with her want of presence of mind: in the society to which she had been accustomed, she had conversed without hesitation, and her opinions had been attended to with deference; now, she was oppressed with her insignificance, and frequently committed blunders, which were occasioned merely by embarrassment: she had once or twice perpetrated a grammatical error, and had inadvertently given a word a vulgar accent; she confounded Ben. Jonson, with the celebrated lexicographer, and had noticed as a fact in history, an anecdote she had met with in an historical romance.

As she mentally rehearsed the conversations, in which she had appeared to so much disadvantage ; in lieu of her unlucky blunders, she substituted pertinent remarks, and could run on with fluency very much to the purpose ; but by the time she had got into good humour with herself, the reflection that all her eloquence was imaginary, while the insignificant figure she had made was real, considerably depressed her spirits ; she felt not only mortified herself, but the cause of mortification in others ; and was rejoiced when the visitors left Woodbourne.

The Miss Ponsonbys had been educated in a very superior manner ; in the attention paid to the cultivation of the mind, and personal accomplishments, the moral and religious duties had been by no means neglected : they were the succourers of the distressed. and the patron-

esses of a school for the children of the poor in the neighbourhood: they had also lately established an institution for the promotion of industry among the elder children, and were now anxious to introduce the improvements which Lady Harriet had recommended.

Mrs. Philip Ponsonby and Elizabeth accompanied them to the village, and being detained longer than they expected, they were obliged, on their return home, to hasten to dress for dinner, Mr. Ponsonby being rather particular with regard to punctuality.

On their being summoned to the dining-room, they found Mr. De Grey, Mrs. Philip Ponsonby's brother was unexpectedly arrived. The Ponsonby family all seemed very glad to see him; and after mutual inquiries had passed,

his sister observed, "I thought you were going into Cornwall, Reginald."

"Yes, it was my intention; but my time has been so taken up that I must defer that tour till next summer. You will think I do nothing but live upon my friends; I am now on my way to Colonel Trent's, and I am just come from my Lord Bellinghurst's."

"Is he the same strange being as ever?"

"The most eccentric creature breathing!—very clever; so are all the Bellinghurst's, extremely clever:—but I think his lordship's oddities increase. We saw nothing of him scarcely; he never made his appearance till dinner time; and frequently remained in his study all day, and half the night, watching some chemical experiment."

“ Where is Lady Bellinghurst now ?”

“ Upon my word I don’t know ; she was not of course mentioned at Haugh-woods.”

“ There was a lady Bellinghurst at Clifton :” said Elizabeth ; “ I saw a good deal of her, when I was with Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke.”

“ Indeed ! what, was she visited ?”

“ O yes ; she lived in a very stylish way.”

“ That, I dare say.”

“ She is very well received ;” said Frederick ; “ her manners are perfectly correct ; and if a man and his wife chuse to part, it would be very hard on the lady that she should be shunned, when

there is no proof of any impropriety in her conduct."

"It is quite natural, I allow," said Mrs. Ponsonby, "for a lawyer to require proof; but the world will always judge for itself; and when a woman disregards the established rules of decorum, she hazards the loss of respectability. Lady Bellinghurst it seems, chuses to brave the world; that is not the way to secure it's good opinion; a retired mode of life would certainly be more becoming for a lady in her unfortunate predicament."

"Perhaps it might;" returned Frederick; "but still there is great excuse for her: Lord Bellinghurst certainly neglected her, and it naturally followed that she had less of his company than that of other men; his jealousy produced continual quarrels, and they had sense enough to separate."

“ I don’t deny that Lord Bellinghurst was in fault,” observed De Grey ; “ but there certainly were very good grounds for his jealousy. His eccentricities have very much increased since this affair ; he is extremely absent ; but he likes having friends at his house, and we could not please him better than by making ourselves quite at home : we kept what hours we liked ; ordered what we chose for dinner, and spent our time *chacun a son goût* : he has plenty of game on his manor, and we had a great deal of sport.”

“ You have been in Wales too, have you not !” said his sister.

“ Yes ; I was at the Frere’s, at Llandovery Castle, where I spent a fortnight very pleasantly :—very nice people are the Freres. I met a particular friend of mine there, Mr. Holford ; and some

agreeable society in the neighbourhood ; and we had no little diversion afforded us by a raw youth that Henry Frere picked up at Tenby : I cannot conceive how it could possibly happen ; but Frere is quite young : the absurdity of the thing was, the man's accepting the invitation, for he was completely out of his place ; you have no notion how ridiculous he made himself from day to day."

The room began to swim round Elizabeth. She had, in a careless manner, let the Ponsonby family know that her brother had spent some time at Llandovery Castle.

Mrs. Ponsonby, who had no suspicion that the "raw youth" was Elizabeth's brother, innocently observed, that there was nothing so unpleasant, she thought,

as meeting people who were out of their proper sphere.

“ Oh, it’s horrible,” said De Grey; “ but this man was entertaining from his perpetual *gaucheries*. When he first came there, Holford told me he drank healths all round during dinner! then, when Lady Frere helped him, he would offer it to me, to Holford, and to Leslie, before he made it his own; and all this time he would fain make us believe he was a gentleman—his attempts were a burlesque on politeness—you may imagine what a creature was this Mr. Meredith!”

De Grey observed the looks of consternation that prevailed amongst his auditors; and the subject was abruptly turned. Mrs. Philip Ponsonby took the first opportunity of informing him

of the connexion with the Meredith family, but it was impossible to mend the matter, apologies would only increase the mischief; and De Grey felt so vexed at what had happened, that he was very glad, two days afterwards, to take his leave.

Elizabeth's feelings had been much hurt by Mr. De Grey's unwelcome reference to her brother; but, as she hoped the account was received as a little over-charged, the acuteness of her sensations, by degrees, gave way to circumstances that more immediately concerned herself. She began to find her introduction into the Ponsonby family extremely irksome; and though it was exactly the rank of life in which she had been so ambitious to move, she was mortified at the self-conviction that she was not calculated to make a figure in it.

In mixed parties, when the merits of an actor or actress were talked of, or the elegance of furniture, or equipage was discussed, Elizabeth felt herself quite at home, and could expatiate on these topics with some degree of judgment; but her faculties seemed to die away upon the introduction of a literary subject. She could not but acknowledge that the Miss Ponsonbys were highly accomplished, well informed, sensible young women; that all matters of fashion were perfectly familiar to them, though subservient to more important concerns. She was now half inclined to begin a course of reading, which she thought might better qualify her to converse with her husband's family, but her taste had been so entirely vitiated by light reading, that she could not summon resolution to attend to instructive works.

It was certainly a very different style of life from that to which she had looked forwards; she had to new-model her ideas, and durst not utter a syllable without first weighing it, to guard against laying herself open to ridicule; and she always waited to ascertain the tone of the company before she hazarded an opinion of her own.

Frederick too, seemed influenced by the regular habits of the family; he was no longer the dashing youth, driving about, blowing horns, to astonish *the natives*; his marriage had given rise to reflection; and, in hopes of making up for his past negligence, he seriously determined on prosecuting his profession; and, as Mr. Ponsonby's income, though large, was not equal to affording a separate establishment for his son, it was settled that Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Ponsonby should consider Woodsbourne

as their home, till Frederick's professional duties should require a more permanent residence in town.

Poor Elizabeth ! she looked forward to this happy epocha with the same eager anticipation as a young heir to his coming of age : till then, she considered herself a bird in a gilded cage.

CHAP. VI.

MR. Shirley's long and expensive illness had proved extremely detrimental to his school, and had reduced him to very great embarrassments, when the situation of governess to the children of Sir George Warre was offered to Maria.

MR. Shirley and his father had both been under great obligations to the Warre family; and Sir George having heard of Mr. Shirley's distresses, and understanding that Maria had received an education which qualified her to be-

come an instructress herself, he proposed to Lady Warre, that, as their daughters were now of an age to require a governess, he should write to Mr. Shirley to know whether such a situation would be agreeable to his daughter.

Lady Warre had no possible objection, she said, if, on seeing the young lady, she appeared to be a fit person to be intrusted with so important a charge; not likely to communicate vulgar manners; and one that would be submissive to her Ladyship's orders, respecting the mode in which she chose her daughters to be educated.

This plan being so far arranged, Sir George and Lady Warre paid Mr. Shirley a visit; Maria was introduced to them; and as she could not fail of interesting every one in her favour, it only remained for Lady Warre to signify the proposal

to Mr. and Mrs. Shirley ; this was done with so much delicacy, and so much apparent benevolence was displayed on the occasion, that they were highly prepossessed in her Ladyship's favour.

“ Indeed,” continued Lady Warre, “ I should scarcely consider Miss Shirley in the light of a governess, as that term is generally understood ; but, as a visiter and a friend, who, with myself, is willing to dedicate some portion of her time to the education of my little girls, and I flatter myself it will not be an unpleasant task ; they are very sweet children ; they have excellent capacities, are extremely well disposed to learn, and I am sure, with good instruction, they will be every thing I could wish.”

There was so much suavity of manner about Lady Warre, that Mr. and Mrs. Shirley were quite charmed with

her, and congratulated their daughter on her good fortune in finding such an amiable friend.

It was a situation, however, which Maria could not but feel mortifying; yet, when she reflected on her father's precarious health, and slender means, she considered it her duty cheerfully to submit; and arrangements were soon made, which proved highly satisfactory to all parties.

Pendenna, Sir George Warre's seat, was about forty miles from Aberfowey; it was a good modern house, surrounded by extensive pleasure grounds, and commanding fine views of the Bristol Channel, and the opposite coast.

Sir George was a pleasant good hu-

moured man, fond of hunting and driving, and company. It never entered his head that a man had any thing to do with the management of children, but he was very fond of them, and displayed his affection by patting the boys on the head, and taking the little girls on his knee.

Lady Warre was a fine woman, with fine manners, and had brought Sir George a fine fortune. Having been considered as very accomplished, she had fancied herself capable of the education of her daughters, and took some pride in having it reported that she instructed them herself. The fatigue, however, soon became insupportable; Sir George perceived she was unequal to it, and was very glad to find she made no objection to the introduction of a governess. That point being gained, he considered

he had done every thing on his part, and left the rest to chance.

Miss Shirley was received with great kindness by Lady Warre; and, as the young ladies who were to be under her care, were just going to bed, an introduction was deferred till the next morning, when Lady Warre conducted her to an apartment, which she intended to appropriate for the school-room.

Emma, the eldest daughter, was a fair well-formed girl, about nine years of age; her sister was two years younger, and of rather a delicate constitution.

“Come here, Lucy, my dear,” said Lady Warre. “This young lady is so good as to come here to give you instruction, and to make you a clever girl: now attend; you are to mind what she

says to you, and you mustn't tease her by being naughty.—Emma, do you hear what I'm saying to your sister; you are to pay the same respect to what Miss Shirley says to you, as you would, if your father or I spoke to you."

" And now, Miss Shirley," continued Lady Warre, " I should like to give you some idea of the method I wish to be adopted with regard to their education. Regularity, you know, is of the greatest importance: that is a point I am sure we shall not differ about. I feel satisfied I shall have no cause to complain of any want of punctuality on your part; for a good example you must be sensible is a very essential part of education."—

" It shall be my endeavour, Madam," said Maria, " to attend very particularly to your directions."

“ Oh but you will often have to exercise your own good sense. They are very fond of reading, and when that is the case, it only remains for the teacher to direct their attention to such books, as will at the same time forward their studies, and afford them entertainment: that’s my plan; I always aim at blending instruction and amusement; and it’s every thing you know, to have children so well inclined.”

“ Now you’ll be very good Emma, I hope; and I shall buy you some pretty thing if you learn your lessons well. You will not teaze them this morning with tasks, Miss Shirley: you can walk out with them, just to get a little acquainted.”

Maria did not receive any very favorable impression of her pupils’ behaviour during the walk. She perceived they had

been accustomed to have a great deal of their own way: they were positive in their assertions; overbearing to each other; and their conduct towards herself was rude, and bordering on insult. She felt what a troublesome task she had undertaken; and despaired of being able to prevail on them to give a proper degree of attention to their studies.

Lady Warre had been extremely indulgent to her children; and the young ladies, from continually hearing that they were to be accomplished, had acquired a notion that they were very clever girls. They could repeat the names of all the rivers in Europe; all the capital cities, and all the islands, lakes, gulfs, and promontories; but so completely by rote, that if they placed one before the other, contrary to the order in which they stood in the book, they would correct them-

selves with as much confusion as if they had placed Paris in Kamtschatka: and in conjugating a French verb, Lucy having said, "shouldest, couldest, wouldest, or mightest," Emma immediately set her right, saying, "no; 'tis shouldest, *wouldest*, couldest or mightest."

Lady Warre's perseverance in educating her daughters, not having kept pace with her impatience to bring them forwards, and no regular system having been pursued, her daughters had been in some things so very superficially instructed, that Maria found it necessary to give them some elementary lessons. This did not tend to promote their goodwill towards her: they thought it unpardonable to be put back; and Lucy, to evade a question she was unable to answer, replied, "oh, but we have got farther than that, Ma'am."

But however irksome to Maria, was the behaviour of her pupils, she had much greater trials to struggle with, as Lady Warre's temper began to unfold itself.

It is scarcely possible, without entering into such particulars as might appear trifling, to give an idea of what Maria suffered, from the succession of irritating remarks, which were so interwoven with other observations, as to escape the notice of every one except the person for whom they were intended.

Lady Warre was one of those persons who, while they assert the prerogative of finding fault, have the art of being always in the right themselves: whether the thing complained of was done in consequence of her orders, or under a permitted discretion, it made no difference to Lady Warre; she was ingenious

enough to make it appear, that there was only the right and the wrong, and was at a loss to comprehend how it could *always* happen that the wrong was pursued, when a person of any common understanding must have perceived what was proper to be done: but it was her misfortune, she supposed, to have people about her who would not take the trouble to *think*.

'Lady Warre was particularly desirous for the children to have proper exercise out of doors in fine weather; and after looking in upon them, as she generally did while they were at their lessons, she told Maria she was going to pay a visit at some distance, and desired her not to forget to take the girls out walking.

After their lessons were over, Maria recollected her orders, and they walked in the park: the two girls were impatient

to see the new plantation, and proceeded farther than Miss Shirley wished, as there appeared some probability of rain: in their way home, they were caught in a shower, and running home as fast as they could, they were met in the hall by Lady Warre, who cried out,

“ Oh. Miss Shirley, how *could* you think of taking them out, when you *saw* it was going to rain.”

“ Indeed Ma'am it appeared very fine when we set out.”

“ But you should not have gone so far: this time of the year, you know, is so subject to storms, that I really am surprised you have not a little more consideration:—dear me, the poor children must be wet through; pray Miss Shirley see that they have all their clothes changed; I dare say they'll

both take violent colds—'tis so very unfortunate."

About a week afterwards, Emma, it was evident, had a cold, which in fact proceeded from sitting in a draught after violent exercise;—but it was immediately attributed by Lady Warre to her having been caught in the rain. "Ah poor Emma!" she cried, "I thought how it would be; that unfortunate walk Miss Shirley I'am afraid did the mischief." This was said, so as to sound rather good-natured, and as if she referred to the subject with reluctance.

As Maria was really anxious to give satisfaction, she took the greatest precaution possible to prevent a similar occurrence; and on a day, which appeared to threaten rain, the usual walk was omitted; it cleared up afterwards however, and Lady Warre expressed her

surprise, on finding at dinner time, that her daughters had not been out.

“ What haven’t you taken the little girls out to day ! really Miss Shirley, it’s very hard on them, such a fine day ! and would have done them so much good : dear me ! ” continued Lady Warre, in a tone which seemed to insinuate that Maria was either obstinate or foolish ; “ I declare one must look after the children as if one had no one to take care of them ! ”

Maria observed that she had been apprehensive of rain, in the early part of the day, and that afterwards the young ladies had been employed in their studies.

“ Well ! but you might surely have taken them out for a little while to enjoy such a fine day : dear me, if they are to be kept moping up like this, I don’t

know what will become of them ; they'll lose all their nice rosy cheeks ;---I went with Mrs. Egerton to Trehowel, and we walked all over the grounds ; and I was thinking to myself what a nice time you must have had for walking---it must have been a sad punishment to them."

Maria, availing herself of the discretion which Lady Warre appeared to grant, occasionally broke through the school-hours, and went out with the girls at such times as appeared most pleasant for walking. The consequence was, some part of their lessons was not so well attended to, which being perceived by Lady Warre and the reason assigned, she wondered Miss Shirley did not keep up more regularity, and insist on having their lessons attended to..

A week passed away, and Maria congratulated herself that the weather and

the school-hours had entered into a compact to befriend her in her indeavours to pursue Lady Warre's directions ; but unluckily, Lucy was asked by her mother to shew her the translation of a difficult French exercise, which her ladyship had injudiciously proposed for her. Lady Warre was quite vexed at its not having been finished ; but there, she couldn't wonder, she said, if the girls were suffered to be continually walking out, when they should be at their studies.

Maria was going to vindicate herself, but was interrupted by Lady Warre's saying, " Indeed I don't mean to find fault with you Miss Shirley, I know you do every thing for the best ; and when that is the case, there's nothing to be said ; it's only rather unfortunate that you should not keep up a little more regularity. When I had the sole charge

of them, there certainly was not any thing of all this. I don't know how it was—however, I dare say it won't happen again.”

It's a pity, thought Maria, that you did not continue the employment, as you seem to fancy you managed so well: and she now found that though Lady Warre had talked at first of taking a share in her daughter's education, she never did any thing more than look in upon them once in the course of the morning, and frequently even that attention was omitted; but her ladyship took care to reserve to herself the privilege of inquiring into the progress they had made; hoping nothing was neglected, and extolling the capacities of the girls, in such a manner, as to let Maria feel, that if they did not improve, the fault must lie with her.

Maria felt the full force of every provoking observation ; but aware of the very high opinion which her father and mother entertained of Lady Warre, she had reason to apprehend, were she to complain of her situation, they might impute her grievances to fancy or discontent : she felt it would be impossible to state one instance of serious complaint, and to talk of trifling vexations, would appear as if she were desirous of finding fault.

The uncomfortableness of her situation however every day increased. , The recollection of George Worthington sometimes painfully distressed her : his behaviour, while he was at Swansea, could not be remembered without giving rise to some slight hope that she was not indifferent to him ; yet the improbability of his ever seriously thinking of her, made her combat every flattering

suggestion which his attentions to her had excited.

The various distressing circumstances which preyed on her mind, brought on a low nervous fever, which, at first, very much alarmed Lady Warre ; but, on being assured that it was not infectious, she was anxious to let Maria see what a friend she had to look up to, and she wrote Mrs. Shirley an account of her daughter's illness, mentioning that she had procured the best advice for her ; and that as it was a great point to have her medicines regularly administered, her Ladyship had herself sat up great part of one night, to see that nothing was omitted, and that there was now every hope of her doing very well.

Mr. and Mrs. Shirley regarded Lady Warre as the best of women, while Maria felt quite overcome by her tiresome at-

tentions. She was only anxious for quiet; but Lady Warre was continually coming into her room, to inquire how she was, what she could do for her, what she could fancy, and persuading her to take a variety of things, which she was sure would do her good; and seemed to wonder at Maria's declining any thing that was proposed, as if she obstinately refused to accelerate her recovery.

Maria easily perceived that Lady Warre considered she was shewing great condescension, but affected to receive Maria's expressions of gratitude, as if she had done no more than her duty.

When Maria was sufficiently recovered to leave her room, Lady Warre supposed it would not be too fatiguing to her, just to hear the little girls their

lessons, adding, “ I have brought them on finely.”

But Maria found, that, instead of forwarding their learning, there was a great deal to re-place ; and she had again to hear the young ladies’ complaints, at the hardship of being put back, when *Mamma and every one* said they were getting on so well.

Lady Warre too, seemed hurt ; but she only observed, she thought it a pity to damp the ardour of children : ’twas a great thing to have them so well inclined to learn ; but to discourage them, she thought, was a sad pity : “ however,” continued her Ladyship, “ I hope you find yourself well enough now, Miss Shirley, to proceed with them your own way, which, I dare say, is the proper method.”

Maria assured her she felt quite equal to the exertion, and the time passed on much the same as it had done previously to her illness. Lady Warre sometimes expressing herself highly pleased with her daughters' progress, at other times *hoping* every thing was done to forward their accomplishments, as if she suspected Maria deficient in her abilities as a governess.

It was from the tone of her Ladyship's voice, more than the words she used, that Maria learned to judge of Lady Warre.

"May I trouble you, Miss Shirley, to reach me that book," might be said without giving rise to a thought beyond the request. Lady Warre's manner seemed to imply, that she really thought Miss Shirley would consider it a trouble.

If Maria happened to be detained, and the girls appeared in the school-room before her, a message was sent, to say the young ladies were waiting ; and, on Maria's entrance, Lady Warre would observe, she had begun hearing their lessons ; it was such a pity to disappoint their ardour ; concluding with a direct compliment of praise to the children, which was intended as an indirect vote of censure on Maria, for her want of punctuality.

On one of these occasions, Maria expressed her concern, and added, that she had been writing home, and was just finishing her letter.

“ Dear me, you appear to be always writing home,” cried Lady Warre, in a tone which seemed to imply, that she thought Maria had been giving an account of the family concerns.

“ I have only written one very short letter, Ma’am, since my illness, in which did not sufficiently express to my family, the kindness of your Ladyship’s attentions.”

“ Dear, Miss Shirley, I can have no objection to your writing ; and, as for my attentions, you have thanked me quite enough, I’m sure ; what I did was no more than was right ; ’tis a duty we owe to one another.”

In the course of the day, Lady Warre inquired whether Miss Shirley had remembered some request she had made.

Maria did not immediately reply, conceiving that a moment’s consideration would remind Lady Warre that her time had been entirely occupied with other concerns ; but her Ladyship was not so reasonable as to remember any

thing but that Maria was writing home, and therefore said, “ Ah, well then, another time will do ; this evening, perhaps, if you have finished your long letter ;” making it apparent that she considered Maria’s writing had interfered with her request.

Maria then ventured to hint how her time had been taken up ; Lady Warre smiled, as much as to say, I won’t press you too hard ; I’ll accept your apology.

CHAP. VII.

SOME company were now soon expected to spend the Christmas at Pendenna; and Maria was informed by Lady Warre, that Sir George's sister was coming; "such a pleasant companion," she said, "and so lively: a nice, clever girl, is Charlotte Warre."

Mr. and Mrs. Hungerford were to be of the party; the latter was Lady Warre's particular friend: Mr. Newcombe, her Ladyship's brother, was also expected; and it was probable he might bring a gentleman or two with him.

Maria scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry at this addition to their family circle: it would relieve her, she hoped, from the irksomeness of Lady Warre's complaining temper; at the same time, she looked forwards with a sense of humiliation to the prospect of being surrounded by strangers, by whom she would probably be regarded as an inferior. She had been led to expect something very superior in Miss Warre, but only found her fashionably accomplished, with very high notions of her own importance; and manners which seemed to demand a deference to her opinions.

Miss Warre came to Pendenna with Mr. and Mrs. Hungerford; and in a few days afterwards, the party was augmented and enlivened by Lady Warre's brother, Mr. Sedgwick, and George Worthington.

While Mr. Newcombe was introducing

his friends, Maria had not been perceived by Worthington, but as he took a survey of the party before him, his surprize at seeing her, was manifested by his repeating her name. He immediately came up to her, and inquired with kindness after her family, and how long she had been at Pendenna.

It was obvious to Maria that he was ignorant of the situation she was in, and she would willingly have set him right in that point; but his attention was called away by Miss Warre, who had no idea of permitting Maria to monopolize his conversation. Mr. Newcombe, she knew, was an engaged man; Mr. Sedgwick not a marrying man; and regarding Maria's pretensions as very insignificant, Miss Warre considered herself exclusively entitled to the attentions of George Worthington.

In the evening, music was talked of. "Will you play Charlotte?" said Lady Warre, "Miss Shirley will be good enough to open the instrument." Maria obeyed, though Miss Warre was near enough to have done it without moving two steps. Miss Warre was known to be a good performer, but affecting humility, declared she could not think of playing before such a judge as Miss Shirley; that Miss Shirley must play first: she however, at length yielded to importunity, and played a concerto of Von Esch's with great execution.

Maria could not now avoid playing; but unused to so public an exhibition, she felt so much confused, as in a considerable degree to injure her performance.

Miss Warre, who understood nothing of timidity herself, made no allowance for it in another; particularly in one

whom she regarded as a hired performer; and expressive, though silent signs of contempt passed between her and Mrs. Hungerford.

They did not escape Worthington's notice, and he thought Miss Warre had never appeared to so much disadvantage. In the course of the day, Lady Warre had made one or two inquiries of Maria, and had sent her out of the room with a message, in a manner that very much puzzled him to account for; nor did he, till the next morning, discover the station which Maria filled in the family; when, on his asking after Miss Shirley, Miss Warre told him that she was in the school-room with the children; adding, "what an unpleasant situation! indeed it is very awkward for all parties; I always feel so uncomfortable when I am in company with one of them: and unfortunately, it has lately happened that

they have continually fallen in my way. I have been at Mrs. John Newcombe's and Mrs. Courtnay's; they have both governesses, and I have taken *such* a dislike to them all: but *this*, seems to be a very quiet, well-inclined young person."

George now wondered he had not before discovered Maria's business at Pendenna, for he recollected Frank Newcombe had mentioned that there was a governess in the house: it distressed him to perceive that Maria was exposed to continual slights and mortifications, and he regarded Miss Warre's observations as giving no very favorable specimen of her disposition.

Lady Warre was delighted with the progress Emma had made in music and drawing; and wishing her brother and his friends to give their testimony of her abilities, she introduced them into the

school-room: after they had paid the required tribute of praise and admiration, which candour, as well as politeness, called for, the party proceeded to the gardens. Here Miss Warre began depreciating Maria, and declared it was great loss of time; "Indeed it is, Lady Warre; you must excuse me, but really Miss Shirley knows nothing of the science; it's a sad pity: and the drawings are in a very bad style; no effect: and Emma has such talents, that she ought to have the very first masters."

The gentlemen thought the young ladies' performances, considering their ages, did a great deal of credit, as well to themselves as to their instructress; and Lady Warre said, she really thought they were getting on very well.

"Oh my dear Lady Warre! you are joking, surely; you cannot be in earnest.

I wish you could hear Philippa Neville; she is not quite so old as Emma, and she plays Mozart and Beethoven as well as I do: but then, she has the advantage of a master in town. I should think Miss Shirley very well able to teach them the A B C part of the concern, but no further; not a note beyond, upon my honour."

Lady Warre did not appear pleased at observations which seemed to be an attack on her judgment; but she made no reply, and walked on before Mrs. Hungerford.

"You see, Mr. Worthington," continued Miss Warre, "they have unfortunately taken it into their heads, that because a young woman has had a little instruction in music, drawing, and French; and can explain the meaning of latitude and longitude, that she is

qualified to go out as a teacher ; but it's quite a mistake, it requires a very complete knowledge and a great deal of judgment in the method of giving instruction, but I fancy this was quite a charity business ; it's unfortunate for Emma, for she ought to be put in very different hands."

Miss Warre certainly did not recommend herself to Worthington, nor did she succeed in depreciating Maria : and though it must be confessed that the interest he had taken in scenes in high life had very much diminished that regard which Maria had once excited ; yet the intercourse which a residence under the same roof afforded did not fail in some degree to revive his early attachment. He was not one, who took pains to conceal his sentiments, and it was soon perceivable to all the house,

that his attentions to Maria were not to be attributed to accidental gallantry.

At a large dinner party at Pendenna, Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke of Llanwyllan, made part of the company. On this occasion, the entertainment was conducted with a great deal of state, and every one was obliged to perform the part assigned to him by the orders of their host; so that, though George longed to sit at the end of the table with Maria, he had to place himself between Mrs. Egerton and Miss Warre; but in the evening, less ceremony prevailed, and though narrowly watched by Mrs. Bolingbroke, which he did not perceive, or perceiving did not care for, he found a seat near Maria, and paid her marked attentions.

George very much disliked the Llan-

wyllan family; their seat was about nine miles from Pendenna, and he had spent a day and a half with them since he had been a visitor at Sir George Warre's: he perceived a certain coldness in their reception of him, and a degree of selfish pride in their manners which much disgusted him: he felt no wish to ingratiate himself with them, and though in taking leave, they hoped to see him again, he secretly determined never to avail himself of their invitation.

The report of Worthington's attachment to Lady Warre's governess had reached Llanwyllan; but had been received with very little credibility; but his open admiration of Maria during the evening of the dinner party, seemed to give it a considerable degree of confirmation, and Mrs. Bolingbroke could scarcely restrain her indignation. "In

deed," said she, to Mrs. Hungerford who sat next to her, "it is a very extraordinary thing, that a young man of good family will let himself down in such a manner. I dare say, he little suspects the artifices that have been employed to entangle him ; but he must be undeceived ; he must not be suffered to lose himself in this way."

"Oh, no doubt," observed Mrs. Hungerford, "the school-master took care to ascertain, which of his pupils would be the best match for his daughter ; and it was easy enough to let them have opportunities of being together."

"And as she is so much older than he is, of course she knew how to make those opportunities answer her views. It is a most shameful piece of business."

“ Then she affects to be so very modest and unassuming ——”

“ Oh, very modest, no doubt, to take in a boy at school in this way ;” returned Mrs. Bolingbroke, fanning herself violently : “ he is much to be pitied, I’m sure ; but I trust he will be brought to his senses. I shall certainly let Mrs. Worthington hear of all this :—luckily however, I find his visit here is nearly over, and I should think it can be no difficult matter to prevent his coming again.”

It was not a little mortifying to Miss Warre to find her claims to Worthington’s notice of no avail when Maria was present ; and as she was pretty well aware of the posture of affairs, she made such use of her information as she thought would best answer her own views.

Without seeming to have an idea of any attachment between them, she spoke to Maria of Worthington's entire dependence on his grandfather ; and of the utter ruin which an imprudent marriage would bring on him : that it had been determined by Mr. Bolingbroke, that he should marry into the Estcourt family to strengthen the Bolingbroke interest in the county.

Maria knew there was some truth in Miss Warre's observations, and therefore did not perceive all the artifice that was employed to make her understand that a union with Worthington was out of the question.

Miss Warre then took care to speak in high terms of Mr. Sedgwick : she pronounced him to be a very superior man ; so well read ; such an agreeable com-

panion ; and possessed of such a fine estate ; concluding with a playful hint that it was impossible not to observe the impression which Maria had made on him, and that it must be her own fault if she did not secure him.

Maria treated all this as raillery, but with the limited knowledge she had of Mr. Sedgwick, Miss Warre's eulogiums appeared very just ; and in the occasional conversations that passed between him and Maria, she had further proof of his having the art of making every thing he said agreeable.

With Mr. Sedgwick, Miss Warre was not deficient in her manœuvres : she commended Miss Shirley's well-bred manners ; asserted that she was born to fill a more dignified station in society ; that any man might be proud in calling her his wife ; but perhaps, she added,

there were few men, who possessed recommendations sufficient to make themselves acceptable to her.

Mr. Sedgwick was much struck with Maria's beauty, and stimulated by his vanity, and Miss Warre's representation of the difficulty of gaining any interest in her affections, he sought opportunities of rendering himself agreeable to her, without having very well defined what his intentions were, in case he appeared to succeed.

With regard to Worthington; Miss Warre relied on her own claims: she thought that what she considered as an insipid specimen of beauty, could have no chance of standing the field against the artillery of sparkling eyes, and the charms of her own elegant manners and brilliant conversation. She first endeavoured to make him sensible of her dis-

tinguished abilities :—and then, that his own were very highly appreciated by her ; but notwithstanding all her manœuvres, she could obtain from him no further notice than such casual civilities as must necessarily pass between persons in the same family. The attentions however which Mr. Sedgwick paid to Maria, were observed by Worthington with a jealous eye ; for though his own pretensions were not very clear, he could not endure that another should obtain the smallest share of her regard.

Maria perceived that she was an object of general observation, and prudently endeavoured to avoid all censure by being as much as possible with the Miss Warres, or by reading or working in her own room. Lady Warre however, who did not penetrate Maria's motives, was by no means pleased at her frequent absence, and was ready to attribute it

to ill-humour, or to any cause rather than the right one. She was walking with Mrs. Hungerford in the garden, and Maria followed with the young ladies. Lady Warre's voice dropt into a soft tone of complaint; but enough was heard by Maria, to make her feel she was the subject of her conversation, and the words, "temper—low spirits—regard—make her happy," &c., could be no otherwise understood by Maria, than that she was represented to Mrs. Hungerford, as a very unpleasant temper; always in low spirits, and that nothing but a regard for her family could make Lady Warre support it so long; that she tried every thing in her power to make her happy, but found it impossible to succeed with a person of such a disposition.

. Maria distinctly heard Mrs. Hungerford reply, that for her part, 'twould

make her quite wretched to have such a person in the house.

Though Lady Warre's attention to her visitors did not allow her so much time to bestow on Maria, yet opportunities occurred but too frequently for exercising her talents in tormenting ; but, however painful to Maria's feelings, her own situation was, she could not regard that of Lady Warre's servants without commiseration ; they had one advantage certainly, they were not spell-bound, as she seemed to be ; but while they continued with her Ladyship, they had to bear the full extent of her ingenuity in mixing kindness and reproach ; she appeared to regard them as beings born for no other purpose than to be useful to her ; expected the most abject submission to her will, and to have her contradictory commands understood and attended to. As long as her servants

could put up with her caprice, they were her *treasures*, which she endeavoured to make them sensible of, by presents and an occasional commendation, when it served to make her abuse of another the more pointed. “ I never saw such a stupid creature as you are, Morris, there’s not one thing you ever do right; here, Mary, you are the only clever servant I have about me, I must get you to attend to this.”

This clever servant, however, was not more likely to give satisfaction than Morris; she exercised her judgment in following some directions, and of course, had to be told she had no business to think; it was her place to obey orders. She ventured with timidity to expostulate, and was dismissed from Lady Warre’s service.

Maria, who was a witness to what

had passed, and felt that Mary was not to blame, was shocked at the treatment the girl had received ; but found her indignation still farther excited, on hearing Lady Warre talk over the provocations of servants with Mrs. Hungerford, to whom her Ladyship had communicated the circumstance of her having been obliged to part with Mary.

“ I thought she had been such an excellent servant,” said Mrs. Hungerford.

“ Yes, she was one of the best I ever had ; there was nothing she did not understand ; but she thought fit to be impertinent—”

“ Oh, that is not to be borne,” cried Mrs. Hungerford ; “ a servant’s impertinence is the last thing I could put up with.”

“ I had given her particular orders, which she had disobeyed ; I *humbly* imagined I might take the liberty to complain that my directions had not been attended to ; but she thought fit to contest the point—”

“ Oh, I never take an answer from a servant—”

“ No, certainly ; to argue a point with them, would be laying oneself open to boundless impertinence.”

“ Well, I’m surprised to hear that Mary is going ; it’s a pity she did not know when she was well off—*you*, that have been *so* kind to her ; but it’s *always* the way ; they are the most ungrateful creatures in the world ; the more you do for them, the worse they are. I had a very vexatious occurrence in my family lately,” continued Mrs. Hungerford ;

“ I had, as I thought, a most excellent servant, the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood ; I took quite a fancy to her, and did a great deal for her family, who had been unfortunate. I had such an opinion of Susan, that I would have trusted her with any thing in the world : well, do you know, she had the baseness to secrete a brooch, that belonged to Lady Llanstephan, who had been on a visit to me—so treacherous ! and it was discovered by my housekeeper at the very time I was doing a kindness to her mother.”

“ Shocking !” cried Lady Warre. “ I declare such instances of depravity make one shudder.”

Some time after this conversation, Maria had occasion to go to a shop in a neighbouring village ; presently, a little girl entered, and Mrs. Price, the mis-

tress of the shop, inquired how her sister Susan was. "You see, Ma'am," said Mrs. Price, turning to Maria, "'tis a young woman that was a servant at Mrs. Hungerford's, and was turned away at a minute's warning, on suspicion of her having stolen something; but I do verily believe she's as honest a creter as ever drew breath; she had no more thought of stealing the brooch than you or I, Ma'am; you see, the thing was this: Lady Llanstephan, about a week after she left Mrs. Hungerford's, wrote, to say she had missed a brooch, that she had a great vally for; so there was a sarch made, but it couldn't be found high nor low. Well, a little after, poor Susan happened to find it in the dressing-room, and, as ill luck would have it, just as she had picked it up, her sister, that little maid as stands there, came to tell her that her mother was very bad, and like to die, and begging Susan to

come to her directly : well, Susan was so alarmed, she did'nt know what to do, not she ; and, putting the brooch in her pocket, thought no more of it, but hurried away to her mother's. On her return home, she bethought herself of the brooch, and was scared enough, as I may say, not to find it in her pocket ; so back she went to her mother's, searching every step of the way, all to no purpose ; well, luckily, she met Mrs. Howell, the parson's lady, who asked her what was the matter : so Susan at once told her of her misfortune, and said how vexed she was that she had not immediately given the brooch to Mrs. Hungerford. Well, in the afternoon, one of the children picked up the brooch in the cottage, and her mother bid her put it in a drawer to take care of it. Just then, Ma'am, who should come in but Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. Hungerford's house-keeper ; the drawer was not quite closed,

and the brooch caught her eye ; so, from that, it followed that poor Susan was a thief ; and all she could say to expostulate herself, went for nothing at all ; Mrs. Howell went a journey the next morning, and nobody's word was heard against Mrs. Morgan : oh, she's so tyrannical obstinate !”

Maria expressed her surprise that Mrs. Howell had not been written to on the subject.

“ Why, Ma'am, you see she was expected home every day, so 'twasn't thought worth while ; but Mrs. Hungerford would have wrote fast enough if she had wanted to learn a new way to fatten her little pigs, that she makes such a fuss about ; but 'twould have been of no use, for the housekeeper did'nt like Susan, so go she must : and many's the good servant she has been

the means of turning off. As for poor Susan, she does take on so, 'tis my royal belief she'll fret herself into a consumption."

As Maria passed the cottage in her way home, she stopped to make some further inquiry into Susan's story, and was so much interested in her favor, that she mentioned the circumstances to Lady Warre, and said she thought it would be proper to write to Mrs. Howell.

Lady Warre highly disapproved of her taking such a step: it would be so very presuming she thought, to interfere in Mrs. Hungerford's affairs; and she wondered Maria should give credit to the trumped up story of a discarded servant, in preference to Mrs. Hungerford's statement. "Mrs. Hungerford would be the last person in the world to do an injustice to a servant. I must beg you will lay aside all thoughts of writing to Mrs.

Howell, as I'm sure it would give great offence to Mrs. Hungerford. Mrs. Howell will return soon I dare say, and if she has any thing to say in the girl's favor, I've no doubt every thing will be done that's proper."

This is leaving too much to chance, thought Maria: the poor girl's feelings have been keenly wounded, and she stands in need of some friend to support her against the insinuations of the house-keeper. Maria was considering in what way she could assist Susan's cause, when she heard that Mrs. Howell was just returned home. She lost no time in going to the cottage to give the earliest intelligence of this welcome news.

As soon as Mrs. Howell was made acquainted with Susan's unmerited disgrace, she kindly came forwards to cor-

roborate her statement; and Mrs. Hungerford being convinced that the poor girl had not intended to act dishonestly, recommended her to a friend who was in want of a servant: she would have been willing to have taken her again herself, but was too much under the influence of the "tyrannical obstinate" Mrs. Morgan.

Maria felt much pleasure in communicating this information to Lady Warre, who, however, did not interest herself further in the matter than to observe, that it seemed a very strange affair; and for her part, she should not have been so easily satisfied: it was very extraordinary that the girl should have taken the brooch home with her; it certainly had a very suspicious appearance.

Maria reminded Lady Warre that Susan had made Mrs. Howell acquainted with

all the circumstances of the case, which of course she would have concealed, had her intentions been dishonest; but her Ladyship still seemed more disposed to doubt, than to admit the possibility of a servant's being in the right. She was glad, however, she said, for *Miss Shirley's sake*, that this unpleasant business had ended so well; but recommended her in future to concern herself less in the affairs of others; particularly with regard to servants, who were really not to be depended upon "

This unfeeling admonition, instead of diminishing the zeal Maria felt in the cause of the unfortunate, made her still more strongly see the necessity of strictly investigating, and impartially judging the conduct of those who were so readily condemned. She was disgusted with the cold and selfish disposition of Lady

Warre, and more than ever regretted the necessity of remaining with her: but the consciousness that she was performing her duty, imparted a consolation that recompensed her for the sacrifices she made.

Those whose lives pass with even tenor, can have little idea of the steadiness required to pursue a course of duty, where frequent trials form a temptation to the dereliction from it; and they too often give themselves credit for constancy in virtue which has never been put to the test: but the mind that is inured to misfortune, analyzes its feelings, and understands how to appreciate the conduct of others.

Hence it is, that adversity is sent us for the wisest purposes; it softens our

hearts, renders us alive to the sorrows of our fellow-creatures, and steadily fixes in us those principles of virtue, which, if acted upon with humility, will obtain their own reward.

CHAP. VIII.

THE season of festivity passed away ; the visitors at Pendenna were gone, and Maria was again the patient endurer of Lady Warre's uncertain temper, which now, under the authority of Miss Warre's decision, assumed a tone of submission to a misfortune: at times, she appeared to treat Maria with a greater degree of kindness, in proportion to the discontent she gave way to, at Emma's not having the same advantages as Miss Neville: at other times she seemed to derive her chief amusement from finding fault, which she so managed as always to

compliment herself with superior judgment. Sometimes she gave her directions in so vague a manner, that it was impossible Maria could understand her precise wishes, and of course, had to be told that there was but the right and the wrong, and that she had unfortunately made choice of the latter.

Habit however, in some measure, reconciled her to her situation; her even temper and conciliating manners had by degrees won the affection of her pupils, and as they now cheerfully attended to her instructions, they had really acquired no inconsiderable stock of information; but Lady Warre still put it all down to their own natural abilities.

Maria had borne the varying humours of Lady Warre for upwards of a twelve-month, when she learnt that the family were to spend the ensuing winter in

London. This was a new scene to Maria; but was not likely to ameliorate her situation, except that Lady Warre would have less time to bestow on her: and she was informed by her Ladyship, that as they went out a great deal, while they were in town, and saw a great deal of company, she hoped it would not be unpleasant to Maria to dine with the Miss Warres.

Maria so far from objecting, was really delighted at being excused making one at Lady Warre's table; but she found, that if she had less of her Ladyship's society, she had more of the company of Mrs. Bloxsome, Lady Warre's woman; a person of considerable consequence. She was the daughter of a Welsh clergyman, who had died leaving nineteen children to shift for themselves. Maria had too just a sense of propriety to feel any pride at the unwelcome intrusion of

Bloxsome, though her want of education and low manners made her a very undesirable companion: she was young and rather handsome; in dress, she was little inferior to her mistress, and looked upon the simple attire of Maria, as proof of a total want of information on a subject, which in Mrs. Bloxsome's mind, had acquired an ascendancy over every other: she therefore took occasion, in the most friendly manner, of offering her services. Maria thanked her for her well meant interference, but assured her, she considered her dress as more consistent with the station she filled, than one of more expence and fashion.

“ Bless your heart Miss Skirley, why you wouldn't be at a bit more expence to dress in the fashion:—now there's your blue silk, if you would but just let me fetch it, I could shew you in a minute how you could alter that frightful sleeve,

and make it quite a fashionable dress; and the one you've on is really no how."

"Indeed Mrs. Bloxsome, I thank you for your very kind intentions, but I shall be quite content with my things as they are."

"Law, dear me, Miss Shirley, it quite puts me in the fidgets, to see a person go on so, when an alteration could be so easily made; but there, to be sure, such a clever young lady as you are, needn't mind how their clothes sit.—I only wish I had one half your learning; I'm sure I often think how glad I should be if I could get any kind friend to give me a little instruction at odd times; 'twould be such an advantage to me. You know Miss Shirley my father was a poor clergyman, with a family of nineteen of us, so what could he do, you know;—and when he died, he left us nothing but the

wide world :—'twas hard enough for us to get a bit of bread; but as for learning, why, dear me, 'twas quite out of the question."

Maria knew Mrs. Bloxsome could read and write, but had a very poor notion of figures; and supposing that probably she wished to have some little instruction in accounts, she said if she could be of any service to her in putting her in the way of improving herself, she should be very happy.

" Well now, that's so kind; but there, it's just like you,—the sweetest temper, as I tell every body:—why then, to say the truth, Miss Shirley, I was thinking, how very much obliged I should be if you would be so kind as just to give me a few lessons in French; I'm longing so to learn it, you can't think.—"

Maria was so surprised she could not immediately determine what reply to make, and Bloxsome ran on:—" Well, there now, you're thinking I sha'nt make any hand of it; but I do assure you, I've got some notion of it already, and when one's willing to do a thing, why law, it seems to me one can do any thing."

" I was thinking," said Maria, " that you might be glad of some little instruction in accounts, or ——."

" Law no Miss, that's what I hate so, I can't bear em; and there Mrs. John Newcombe's woman can talk French quite fluently; and to hear her and Mr. Jackson go on chattering without being able to know a word they're saying, and to feel that one's sitting up like a fool, is beyond bearing; Mr. Jackson you know Miss Shirley, is Mrs. Worthington's

butler, and a most gentleman man he is, oh he's been in France Miss, and travelled all over the Conternent with Mr. Emersley."

" I'm sorry Bloxsome I can't oblige you in the way you wish.—Indeed, I should not think Lady Warre would approve of it."

" Dear me Miss, you need n't be so scrupulous; what harm can it do; or how will she be a bit the worse—indeed she'd be all the better for having a person about her, who is a little accomplished—'tis a little hard I must say—when such an opportunity offers, that one can't have the advantage of it; but there I suppose you're afraid I should ten be as clever as you are; but since you chuse to refuse me, I'll be bound I'll find some one or other that 'll be glad to give me some lessons:—so mighty scrupulous!"

After this misunderstanding, Mrs. Bloxsome thought fit to conduct herself towards Maria, with an air of offended majesty; the very few attentions she had been accustomed to pay to her, were now wholly omitted or done in such a manner as to mark her displeasure: even before Lady Warre, feeling her own strength in her place, Bloxsome shewed so little civility to Maria, that Lady Warre could not help noticing it, and when Bloxsome had left the room, she said, in a tone which seemed to throw all the blame on Maria, that she was sorry to observe they did not appear on friendly terms: “ *she’s* a good creature,” continued Lady Warre; “ and I’ve a great value for her; one quite *feels*, you know, for any one who has been reduced to so low a situation--- a clergyman’s daughter! You should consider Miss Shirley, that it was no fault of her’s, that she was obliged to go out as a servant; if her father had lived,

and had been able to have given her such an education as you have had, she might have been at this time in as good a place as your's."

"I am afraid Ma'am," said Maria, "you imagine that I have conducted myself towards Bloxsome with an unbecoming pride; but I do assure your Ladyship, I should be the last person to make another feel their inferiority."

"Oh I'm sure I don't desire to be made a party concerned in this matter; I only hope," added Lady Warre, as she left the room, "you will not continue this ill-will towards each other, or at least, that it may be forgotten when I am by: nothing is so disagreeable."

A few days afterwards, Maria was walking with the Miss Warre's in the Park, which was not far from Sir George Warre's residence, when Blox-

some was dispatched after them with a message, requiring their return to the house; she was explaining to Maria the reason for this, when a well-dressed man overtook them, and as he passed, stopt a few seconds to speak to Bloxsome; at that instant, Mrs. Bolingbroke, of Llanwyllan, drove by, and recognising Maria, observed she was in company with Mrs. Worthington's butler.

The moment after the carriage had passed, he made his bow to Bloxsome, who now informed Maria that it was Mr. Jackson, and begged to know what she thought of him.

Maria said she took very little notice of him.

“ Well for my part,” cried Bloxsome, “ I’ve no notion of giving myself airs; though he’s not a gentleman born, he’s

not behind the best of 'em in manners, I can tell you.—I hope you saw who was in that carriage that passed, when Mr. Jackson was speaking to me; why, 'twas no other than that proud creature, Mrs. Bolingbroke; and she stared so at you as she went by, as if her eyes were going to jump out of the window."

Maria cared very little about Mr. Jackson or Mrs. Bolingbroke: she was anticipating the reception she should have from Lady Warre. She felt that she had not intentionally broken through any of her Ladyship's orders, but that, she knew, would very little avail her.

"Why, Miss Shirley," cried Lady Warre, fretfully, "where have you been all the morning?—I declare, it's a very extraordinary thing, I can place no dependence on any one. You know I told you I expected Mrs. Somerset

would call with her daughters, to see Emma and Lucy, and now they have been here, and couldn't stop; so very vexing—and they are going out of town to-morrow.”

Maria was ready to admit that Lady Warre had observed on the preceding day, that she thought it *not unlikely* that Mrs. Somerset would call *in a day or two*, but the visit was by no means certain; and as it was now an hour earlier than morning-calls are usually made, Maria was going to explain, that it had been her intention to have been at home by the time Lady Warre expected her friends, when she was cut short with “Oh, I beg I may have no reply on a point so very clear; if you will please to recollect, I told you I thought it likely Mrs. Somerset would call to-day, and that I particularly wished Emma and Lucy not to be out of the way;

you can't pretend to say that was not the case."

" I was only going to observe, Ma'am, in justification, that ——"

" In justification ! I believe there's no occasion for any in this case ; *I* require none—so let me *entreat* that we have no *scene* of that sort."

" What, not justify myself, Ma'am, when ——"

" You, take up every thing so seriously, Miss Shirley ; there's really no understanding you. I dare say you meant very well ; only rather unfortunate in not exercising a little thought. I am quite satisfied you see ; so let's drop this unpleasant subject. I declare it quite unfits one for every thing : the whole day is made uncomfortable."

Some of these conferences had not ended quite so amicably. Maria, conscious of having acted right, could not, without sacrificing her self-esteem, affect indifference to the provocations she received. She felt much hurt at some expressions which had dropt from Lady Warre, and was too sincere entirely to disguise her feelings.

This, Lady Warre interpreted into an unforgiving temper; and, to shew the difference in her own disposition, she acknowledged herself to be warm, and might have said, nay, she was ready to confess that she had said many things she was sorry for; but she never, for a moment, afterwards harboured any ill will.

This seemed to imply, that she thought Miss Shirley did; Maria therefore observed, she was fully sensible of her

Ladyship's great kindness to her, and hoped that in future, when any thing of an unpleasant nature passed between them, she should have so much command over her feelings, as to assume more cheerfulness, if that was what Lady Warre expected ; though, for her own part, she thought it would be but a poor exchange for sincerity ; and, as for harbouring ill-will, she was the last person of whom it could with justice be said.

Lady Warre expressed regret that there should be any misunderstanding between them, and declared she was ready to make any concession that would satisfy Maria.

The same scenes continually recurring, Lady Warre found begging pardon as irksome as Maria found her Ladyship's unwarrantable complaints, and she

soon found a pretence to get rid of a person whose equal temper appeared like a constant reproof to her own.

Having settled this point, she communicated to Maria that she had thought it best for her little girls to have masters to attend them, and therefore, that they would not have occasion for a governess. This was done with a great shew of kindness, and Lady Warre intimated, that if Maria wished to hear of any other situation, how happy she should be to recommend her; and then enlarged on the various good qualities and great accomplishments of Maria, which partook too much of the nature of flattery to be agreeable, and would, no doubt, appear a little extraordinary to a stranger, who would probably inquire why Lady Warre should part with a person of such extraordinary merit—and perhaps excite suspicion of there being some se-

rious charge against her, which such high encomiums were necessary to counterbalance.

Maria was not very much surprised at this communication, and were it not for the pain it might give her father and mother, she would have rejoiced at the prospect of changing her situation. She heard Lady Warre with composure, and after thanking her for the kind interest she took in her behalf, said, she would write to her father, and consult him on the subject.

“ Tell him, my dear, we part in no anger, and that you are welcome to continue here as long as you like, and that we will take care and see you safe home.”

Maria was fully aware that a wish to have masters attend the Miss Warres, was not the sole motive which induced

Lady Warre to part with her; but as that was the only reason assigned by her Ladyship, she did not think it necessary to inform her father that there was any other cause, as it would only tend to distress him.

She thought it right to mention Lady Warre's offer of recommending her as a governess among her friends, though this was done in such a way, as she thought might lead her father to guess it was not an employment she would voluntarily make choice of, if there were not reasons for making it desirable.

Mr. Shirley undisguisedly told her, that his difficulties, so far from being removed, were considerably increased: he lamented the necessity of the separation from her family, but he trusted she would soon meet with a comfortable situation. In the meantime, he said,

there were some relations of his, who lived near London, who would be glad to see her; he had written to them, in order that Maria might have the advantage of their advice in accepting any new situation, and in reply, he had received a very friendly letter, requesting Maria to make their house her home, till an eligible situation should offer.

Maria having acquainted Lady Warre with the invitation she had received, again repeated her thanks for her Ladyship's kindness. Lady Warre insisted on Maria's having the carriage to convey her to Brompton, and took leave of her with many expressions of regard.

CHAP. IX.

MRS. BROWN received Maria with great kindness, and taking her by the hand, led her into the parlour, saying, “ Mr. Brown is gone to town on a little business ; for though he has left off trade, he likes to pop in now and then to see how the old concern goes on, and the Cowleys are always glad to see him, so he generally goes to town of a morning just to hear the news :—but knowing you were coming, he wouldn’t have gone to day if it hadn’t been for some particular business ; and so now you and

I can have a little chat together, before he comes home:—we shan't be long getting acquainted with one another, I warrant."

Maria was beginning to express her thanks for the kind invitation, but Mrs. Brown interrupted her. "Oh don't say a word about that; you're as welcome as if you were my own child: your father and my father were first cousins, and when we were children we used to play together, and were as happy as the day was long, but time and change of place and one thing and t'other have now quite made us strangers. I was very glad when your father wrote me about you, to find it was in my power to be of any service, and my good man the same:—there ain't a worthier creature breathing than my Benjamin; the best tempered, cheerfullest companion; as you'll say when you see him: and

now Maria, I dare say by this time you begin to know me a little bit—you see, I'm an old fashioned body, and like to have every thing neat and comfortable about me;—I ain't one of those that make a shew of this thing and t'other thing just to pretend to be in the fashion; and all the while pinch themselves behind the scenes, and don't make both ends meet after all, perhaps—no, that ain't my way; I like to live one day as I do another, and be just as comfortable *out* of sight as *in* sight,—and so you'll say, when you come to see how we go on."

Maria made some suitable observation, and Mrs. Brown continued,—“ You see Maria I have been a very active woman in my time,—but my health is not so good as formerly: it can't be expected;—no, I find I can't walk to town of a mornjng and back to dinner as I used

to do ;—however I don't suffer myself to be idle for all that, as you'll say when you come to know me a little better.—Idleness is the worst of all habits ; for it not only prevents our doing good, but it's the very way to bring people into all sorts of wickedness.”

Maria observed she had always accustomed herself to a great deal of industry, and should be very happy to make herself useful.

“ I knew you would ; your father wasn't the person to bring up his children in idleness, *I* know ;—and I see you and I shall agree mighty well,—and you shall be as welcome to stay here as long as you like.”

“ You are *very* kind ——”

“ Not a word,—we shall certainly fall

out if you begin thanking:—I tell'e I have a great regard for your dear father, —and I've taken a great liking to you: and where I take a fancy, I don't do things by halves, I can promise'e; so if you like our way of living, why there's no need, as I see, for any change. You shall want for nothing while you are with us, and perhaps I may help you to a good husband: I have one in my eye; but I shan't say who,—no, I shall leave that to come of itself——”

“ Indeed, Ma'am,” said Maria smiling, “ I hope I shall make myself too agreeable for you to contrive any scheme of that sort to get rid of me.”

“ Don't you frighten yourself: I don't mean to dictate, nor to persuade:—only, all that I say, is just this; if you haven't got any partiality for any one else, I

know of a very good match for'e; one that isn't to be sneezed at, *I* can tell'e."

" Well, Ma'am, I shall be a better judge when I've seen the gentleman; I am afraid I shall raise my expectations too high;—and then, after all, if he should not like me!"

" Oh there's no fear of that;—if he takes as great a fancy to'e as I have, he won't be long before he shows it;—you'll soon see: and mind, I promise'e, the wedding cloaths shall be *my* business—ah, well, you may laugh;—you think I shall be disappointed perhaps;—well, if so, 'twill be all the worse for the gentleman:—he won't meet with such another in a summer's day, *I* can tell him,—and I shall have you the longer; so much the better for me, and the money I should lay out in wedding

clothes I shall lay by for you, with a little matter besides ; but I don't mean by that, to bribe you to stay here against your will ; because, where I take a liking, 'taint a little matter would alter my intentions ;—so whether you stayed, or whether you went, wouldn't make any odds : so now I only wish you would be as free with me as I am with you ; that's the way, *I* think, to live happy and comfortable together."

Maria could do no less than be highly pleased with such friends.

" That's well my love, and here's my good man returned. Why you're late to day, Benjamin," continued Mrs. Brown, as her husband entered.

Mr. Brown was very hearty in his reception of Maria, and the remainder of the day was spent in a manner that

gave her a very favourable idea of the harmony of this worthy couple, and convinced her how much true happiness depended on a contented mind, and a disposition to promote the comfort of one another.

Mr. Brown had been concerned in a snuff manufactory, in which he had, by honest industry, acquired a comfortable independence ; and having no family to provide for, he retired from business to enjoy his well-earned competency while he had health and strength : he bought a snug little box at Brompton with a neat garden, in which he amused himself with cultivating flowers, and prided himself upon his beds of tulips, anemones, and ranunculuses.

These were all introduced to Maria the next morning in great form, and their various merits laid down, with a serious-

ness that denoted the importance in which they were held.

About eleven o'clock Mr. Brown set out for his walk to town ; and his wife then intimated to Maria that she had a little job in hand, in which she thought Maria could assist her : " and what do you think it is ? " continued she, " why now, I'll tell'e. Mr. Brown dropt something of a hint, about a week ago, that he wanted some new shirts ; so I didn't say any thing, but I went and got the cloth, and I've cut 'em all out without his knowing an item of the matter, and there's nothing to do, but to make 'em up as fast as we can. I had a thought of having some person in, to help ; but then he'd find out something about it ; besides, I wanted to do it all myself, because 'tis to give him on his birth-day ; but now you are here, 'tis another thing, he'll be as proud as a prince to wear shirts

made by you, I can promise'e,—so now, what d'ye think of it, eh?"

Maria said she should be quite delighted to have an opportunity of making herself useful.

“ I *knew* you would ; so now we've got no time to lose, because we can only be about it when he's away you know ; else he'll find us out ; and I want it to be a little surprise ; so, my dear, there's needles and thread and some tape, and here's scissars and pincush, and so now we'll set-to, and I'll be bound, we'll have finished 'em all in good time.—There, you see, you begin this way ; yes—ah, I see you know very well what you're about. Why I wouldn't give a fig for all the learning in the land, without being able to make oneself useful, and knowing what's what.—I dare say though, I shall have some things to

teach you ; for as you've been living among fine people, you can't be expected to know much about managing household affairs. How should you ? as I say ; but I'll soon put you in the way of it : aye, and perhaps by and by, you may be able to market for me,—but there's time enough for that. Why you get on famously I do declare,—quite judgmatically—that's something like ;—oh, I do like to see people in earnest in what they're about ;—but now mind, when my good man comes home, you know, we must put away all our work, and then I'll tell'e what I shall want you to do for me. You must know, I keep a book to copy any thing that strikes my fancy ; I've got some receipts that were lent me for rheumatism and cholic, and so now, I should like for you to copy them in my book for me. You'll do it as well again as I should—and if you've time, or indeed to-morrow will

do for that, I've a capital song here ; 'tis the life of Buonaparte ; 'tis rather long to be sure, but 'tis a capital thing, as you'll say when you come to read it. —I can say great part of it by heart,—but I need not return the copy for some days, so there'll be no need for you to hurry yourself about that ;—and as you're such a genius, I dare say you could put some pretty tune to it."

" Oh, indeed, Ma'am, I couldn't."

" Oh yes, you could, if you've a mind to ; law any thing you know :—however, I won't interrupt you now ;—well, you are a nice worker, indeed ;—'twill be such a surprise to him :—you can copy the receipts at this end of the book, and the song could follow these pretty lines on the death of an infant,

" Sweet bud ! that promised fair to bloom."

The shirts were nearly finished, when Mrs. Brown's maid unintentionally disclosed the secret to her master, the very day before the surprise was to have taken place ; this was a great vexation to Mrs. Brown, " 'twas so hard upon us," she said, " after we had been working so, to find all our plan knocked in the head ;" her vexation wore off by the evening, and the next day she was as good tempered as ever. She drank Mr. Brown's health in a bumper after dinner, and made Maria do the same ; this worthy couple then saluted each other, and recounted many anecdotes of their juvenile days.

CHAP. X.

THE next day, Mrs. Brown went to town, leaving Maria at home copying the life of Buonaparte, which had been forgotten till the owner had requested to have his copy again.

On Mrs. Brown's return, she shewed Maria a piece of linen for a gown, and asked her opinion of it. Maria had a suspicion of its destination, and would not disappoint Mrs. Brown by condemning her taste. "Well then," said Mrs. Brown, "'tis your's! I bought it for 'e, and only waited to find out whether you

liked it, before I told 'e of it! because if you hadn't, I should have taken 'e to the shop to chuse for yourself;—but I must say, I'm very glad you like this; for I do think it's a very pretty neat thing, and will be very useful at home you know; for I observe all your things are much too nice to wear in a common way, but this will come in very clever: and this ain't all neither, my good man you must know has commissioned me to buy you something, for he wants to make you a present, as a little compliment for the trouble you had in making his shirts; but there we haven't thought yet what it shall be; but we won't be in a hurry, you know; we'll wait a bit, and see what'll be most acceptable; for what's the use of presents, as I say, if they aren't things we want; however, we'll talk this matter over another time:" Maria assured Mrs. Brown, that the trifling service it had been in her power

to offer, was not deserving their notice, in comparison with the kindness she had received from them.

“ Oh nonsense, don’t tell *me*; why law, if he likes to make you a present, why shouldn’t he; so now no more about that: Oh, I want to know how you liked that young man we met at Mr. Nicholas’s last night, young Webb.”

“ He seemed well behaved, I think,” said Maria, “ but rather grave and ceremonious.”

“ Ah that will wear off all in good time: a little shy or so, among strangers at first; but when you come better acquainted, you’ll like him mightily; as you’ll say when you know more of him: he’ll make a good husband; I *know* he will, and now I’ll tell’e who he is. Why his father rose himself from nothing as I may

say; from nothing; and now he's worth a matter of 10,000l.! and this young man, that you met last night, and sat next to at supper; I say, do you hear, this young man is his only son! his only child! and will have all his father's fortune! besides coming into the business; and what's more, and better than all, he has been brought up in a prudent way; and as for his character, there ain't one in a thousand that has a better; I've a known him from a baby, so I must know: he's a sober, industrious young man; I don't believe he was ever known to be in liquor, or to do any improper thing;---he's none of you flashing city bucks, but he's much better; he's a good young man, and *I* think very well looking as times go."

" I've no doubt Ma'am," said Maria,
" he's deserving of the high character

you have given him, but one can't always——”

“ No, that's very true; and as I said before, 'tisn't my intention to persuade or to dictate; all as is, I just tell'e, what I know, and then let things take their course. I only hope you ha'n't got any follish notions in your head, about squires or lords; for I can tell'e, they aren't the sort to make good husbands; and if you've been listening to their flattery and nonsense where you've been, why so much the worse, that's all I can say; but I do *sincerely* hope and trust you've too much sense to waste a thought upon such as they; for they be a deceitful set;—and perhaps wouldn't think no more of you after you were gone; or only in an improper way you know—but there, that's neither here nor there; I'm speaking now, all out of book as I may say. And now, I'll tell'e

what;—young Webb happened to say he liked to see a young woman in a cap, so I was sorry you know, that you hadn't one on; but now, what dy'e think I've done? why I've been and bought you a very pretty genteel cap, on purpose to wear this afternoon at Mrs. Dobson's, where I haven't a doubt but we shall meet him!"

“ Wouldn't it look rather too much like *setting my cap at him* ?” said Maria smiling.

“ Nonsense!” cried Mrs. Brown.—
“ Why 'twould be so natural that you should be sometimes in a cap, that 'twouldn't look particular at all! 'Tis a very pretty one, as you'll say when you have seen it, and has a beautiful myrtle wreath in it; come up in my room, and I'll shew it to you.”

Maria wore the cap; but Mrs. Brown observed to her husband, when they returned home, that somehow or other, young Webb and Maria did not seem to get on well together.

“ Ah, well, let 'em alone,” said he, “ and when they get more acquainted, you'll be a better judge.”

“ My dear Maria,” said Mrs. Brown, “ I intended going to town this morning after breakfast, but I don't find myself well enough to undertake the walk. I've made a memorandum here, of a few things I want bought, and if you thought you could do any of them for me, why 'twould be very convenient.”

“ I've no doubt Ma'am I should be able to do it all—only, I've not been much used to walk alone—would it be quite so proper ?”

“ Proper! my dear;—why what are you thinking of; why do you think, I’d ask you to do a thing that’s improper?—law there’s nothing in it at all; Miss Chilcott walks into town by herself continually, and you would only have to go as far as Oxford-street; but if you had rather not —.”

“ Oh Ma’am, I’ll go with a great deal of pleasure.”

“ Why then my dear, in the first place, please to call at Mr. Langdon’s, and say I’m very much surprised he has not sent home the easy chair:—then, here’s some little matters to be bought at our grocer’s; and if you think you could go a step further, and order a piece of cheese for us at Mr. Prankard’s, why ’tis what we shall want very bad, the same price as the last, and as near the same sort as you can get: the man will let us have what’s

good, so you needn't be under any fear on that head."

Maria set out on this embassy with no very comfortable feelings: she had during her residence at Lady Warre's become acquainted with many of her friends, whom she would by no means wish to encounter on her way.

She met with little difficulty in accomplishing all her orders, except the cheese, and when in the act of taking a specimen, which the shopman insisted on her taking, Mr. Philip Somerset entered the shop, saying, "oh, pray, has Mr. — have you sent those Stilton cheeses according to my directions?" Then recognising Miss Shirley, he continued, "oh what you are cheese chusing too; taste and try before you buy,—a very good rule—you must know, I'm a capital judge, and I'll give you my opinion on

this *mity* concern: in the first place, I can't say much in favor of the one before you;—but *that* I pronounce good."

"Yes, Sir," said the shopman, "but that is two-pence a pound more."

"Oh, well then, I dare say, it is all the difference the better."

"I'm not chusing for myself," said Maria, "I must therefore follow my orders you know."

"Certainly, certainly," said Mr. Somerset; and as his eye glanced towards the street, he perceived some friends passing, with whom he chatted a few minutes, then looking back into the shop, he continued, "what not decided yet Miss Shirley---."

To complete her confusion, Maria had

now to return the bows of two more of Lady Warre's acquaintance.

“ Well, I wish you success,” cried Mr. Somerset, “ but I recommend you to follow my advice ; pray make my compliments to Lady Warre, and assure her I should have called, but I have been from town these two months—good morning.”

Maria had no time for explanation—it was of little consequence her being seen buying cheese,—but the young men all seemed to regard her with a good deal of curiosity, and she could not help feeling vexed.

Maria had ordered the several articles she had purchased to be taken to a shop where Mrs. Brown was in the habit of having parcels left, intending to call there for them, and take them home in a coach :

the last article she purchased, she knew Mrs. Brown was particularly anxious to receive that day, and as it would not much incommode her, she preferred carrying it herself, rather than trust to the shopman's punctuality.

She had not proceeded far, when Mr. Sedgwick perceived her: he knew she had left Lady Warre's, but had not yet discovered her retreat, he therefore came up to her, declaring he was overjoyed at seeing her again; and notwithstanding Maria did all she could to make him sensible she would rather be without his company, he persisted in accompanying her to the shop where her other purchases were left: he observed she was carrying a parcel, and was in more humble attire than she used to be. Circumstances which should have excited delicate consideration, had the opposite effect on Mr. Sedgwick, and pluming himself on his

personal recommendations, he flattered himself that she was within the reach of temptation.

Maria's reflections, as she proceeded home in her hackney coach, were of no very pleasing cast : her present situation, notwithstanding the great kindness she experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Brown, did not appear calculated to make her happy : it was certainly preferable to the continual scenes of altercation she had endured at Lady Warre's ; but she sighed for the comforts of home, and would have been ready to have made almost any sacrifice to regain a share of her paternal roof. She was aware, however, that though her parents were sincerely sorry to part with her, they considered it of very great consequence that she should endeavour to exercise her talents for her advancement in the world, which might not only prove the means of securing to

herself a comfortable independence, but might also tend to the advantage of her brothers or sister. Under these considerations, Maria saw little prospect of bettering her condition, and thought it a duty she owed her family to endeavour to gain such a situation as would be most likely to answer her parents' views.

Having made up her mind on this point, she explained her motives to Mr. and Mrs. Brown, with as much delicacy as she could; and after having repeatedly urged her reasons, in reply to Mrs. Brown's wondering and wondering why she could not stay with them, where she was so happy and so comfortable; she at last succeeded in convincing them that she was in earnest. This difficulty being got over, Maria wrote a note to Lady Warre, stating, that though Mr. and Mrs. Brown had pressed her to remain with them as long as she found it agreeable,

she had not given up her intention of seeking another situation as governess; particularly as she knew it was her father's wish; and therefore requested, if Lady Warre heard of a place likely to suit, she would be kind enough to inform her of it.

This brought a very *palavering* note from Lady Warre expressive of the great regard she had for her, and promising to make it her business to serve her.

Maria was now in daily expectation of hearing of places, where a governess was wanted, with all the disgust, which a delicate mind cannot help feeling, at the necessity of being introduced into a new family, with which, however unpleasant their manners might be, she would be obliged to associate.

Every day that passed without a second note from Lady Warre, seemed a respite; but as this could not last long, she endeavoured in the meantime to stifle every rising sigh at her future prospects, and exerted herself to command a cheerful temper, and to discharge all those duties which her kind friends seemed to expect. She had long given up all thoughts of Worthington, and in her present retirement, there was as little chance of their meeting as if they had been in different kingdoms. She had heard before she had left Lady Warre's, that he had at last obtained his grandfather's consent to his going into the army, and she had understood that his regiment was very soon expected to embark for foreign service. She had also heard that Mr. Arthur Bolingbroke had by his marriage, and extravagant style of life, so greatly offended his grandfather, that his brother

was now considered the favorite; this circumstance, even more than Worthington's absence, she feared would tend to obliterate all the regard he might once have had for her.

CHAP. XI.

LADY WARRE and Mrs. Worthington did not visit; and when Maria accompanied her Ladyship to town, George had been making a tour in Scotland with one of his college friends. On his arrival in London, he left his name at Lady Warre's, and a few days afterwards received an invitation to an evening party: he went in full expectation of meeting Maria, and, on his inquiring after her, Lady Warre had only time to tell him she was gone to some relations at Brompton, before her attention was

taken up by the entrance of more company. He was considering what relations Maria could have at Brompton, when he was accosted by Miss Warre, who, having heard his inquiry after Miss Shirley, did not fail to offer her condolence on his finding the bird flown.

“What, has that young woman left Lady Warre?” said Mrs. Bolingbroke of Llanwyllan (though she had been before apprized of the circumstance); “I’m really very glad to hear it; I did not approve of her conduct at all: there were many things I noticed which I did not choose to tell Lady Warre. I really saw her not long ago in the Park, in company with servants and footmen. Your mother’s butler, Mr. Worthington, was among them. I’m afraid she’s got into low company: nothing could be so improper—’twas really dangerous for the Miss Warres to have such a person about

them. I have not heard where she has taken herself to."

"She has some relations at Brompton," said Miss Warre.

"That's the best place for her then, I should think, unless she went back to her father's. Lady Warre asked me if I knew of a situation for her as a governess; but really, you know, it was impossible for me to recommend her to any friend of mine; but Lady Warre, out of regard to the girl's family, I believe, is very desirous of getting her into some respectable place, and therefore makes it a point to give her a good character—I wish she deserved it: but Lady Warre is not aware of the improprieties she has been guilty of."

George was confounded with what he had heard, and was preparing to offer

something in vindication of Maria, but was interrupted by some other persons speaking to Mrs. Bolingbroke; the dancing soon afterwards commenced, and the gaiety of the evening nearly effaced the recollection of Mrs. Bolingbroke's malicious insinuations.

The next day, in passing through Oxford Street, George perceived an elegant figure on the other side of the street, which resembled Maria Shirley; on a nearer approach, all doubt was removed; and, to his confusion, Mr. Sedgwick was with her.

The jealousy he had felt while he was at Pendenna, was revived; Mrs. Bolingbroke's insinuations too, were now remembered with increased credibility, and though his conduct had shewn very little proof of his retaining any particular attachment for Maria, he turned away

from her, with the feelings of an injured lover.

On his return home, he found his mother in considerable distress, in consequence of some accounts she had received of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke's imprudent way of living. That they had both played very high, she had been aware, when they were in town; but it was now reported that her son spent all his time at the gaming-table, while his wife was gracing the equipage of a man of high fashion, but of a notoriously unprincipled character.

This information had been communicated with delicacy, and she entreated George to set off immediately for Brighton, where Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke then were, hoping his presence might have some influence in checking

the career of extravagance and imprudence in which they were involved.

But George was himself too much inclined to the amusements of fashionable life, to be a mentor to his infatuated brother. He was not, however, addicted to high play, and all he could do was, to endeavour to engage his brother in other pursuits, and, with his wife, to supply the place of Major Blagrove.

He had not steadiness, however, to persevere in his intentions, and, attracted by the gaieties of Brighton, his presence was soon regarded by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bolingbroke with as much indifference as if he were a stranger to them. Habit too, soon began to obscure George's vision, and what would have struck him at a distance as a great im-

propriety in Mrs. Bolingbroke, now appeared scarcely reprehensible. The letters his mother received from him tended very much to ease her mind ; but while she flattered herself that the reports which had reached her, had been greatly exaggerated, Arthur was still the victim of play, Major Blgrave the constant companion of Mrs. Bolingbroke, and George engaged in all the fashionable pursuits of the place.

After a restless night, George rose one morning to enjoy the refreshing breezes on the beach : he rambled to a considerable distance, and perceived an elegant female figure exploring a part of the cliff where the herbage was more abundant.

As she descended, she appeared fearful of falling ; George advanced towards her to offer his assistance, when he re-

cognized a handsome face he had seen at a party a few evenings before.

Her fondness for botany, she said, in one of the sweetest voices George had ever heard, had led her to venture farther than she had intended, in search of a rare plant, which she had been told was to be found about the cliffs; but she had been unsuccessful. George requested a description of the plant, that he might pursue the search.

A conversation thus begun, was easily continued: the lady appeared at no loss; and when one subject began to droop, she would skilfully start another.

As they proceeded, a cottage pleasantly situated, appeared in sight; and the lady taking a path which directly led to it, George concluded it was her residence; and as she had mentioned

having a collection of botanical specimens, he expressed a hope that he might be favoured with a sight of them.

Her mother, she said, was an invalid, and was not yet risen, but if he would favour them with a visit the following morning at twelve, she should have great pleasure in shewing him her little collection.

George respectfully took leave, and in the course of the day, made inquiries at the library, after the inhabitants of the cottage. He was informed that their name was Rawstorne, that they had been at the cottage about two months, had appeared at places of public amusement when first they settled there, and had some few acquaintance, but that latterly, the mother's health had prevented their being much from home.

George repaired to the cottage the next morning at the appointed hour: as he approached the house, he heard the notes of a harp accompanying the voice of Miss Rawstorne: the door was open; and as he was preparing to give notice of his arrival, he perceived the parlour-door also open. Miss Rawstorne rose from her harp with some confusion; he begged her to continue the delightful strains he had heard, and Miss Rawstorne, with an air of unaffected simplicity, readily complied; she accompanied her singing with the most touching melody, and finished with a grace of exquisite sweetness, and a look at George, which reached his heart.

He was enraptured with her execution, and she was so obliging as to sing several other airs, equally calculated to captivate.

His eye had taken a rapid survey of the apartment, which, though small, was tastefully fitted up, ornamented with drawings of various kinds; in the recesses were books, and near the window a few exotics.

The subject of one of the airs she had sung, led him to advert to poetry, which introduced a conversation, in which Miss Rawstorne shewed herself very much at home. George was charmed with her society; he almost forgot that the professed object of his visit had been to see her botanical specimens, and as he was going to remind her of it, some remarks on the picturesque, led the way to a discovery that Miss Rawstorne had a port-folio of sketches she had taken in her various tours; George, however, having been nearly two hours at Rose Cottage, began to think he ought not to prolong his visit, but Miss Rawstorne,

with a graceful simplicity, declared he must not go till he had seen her collection, and the botanical specimens were produced. She conversed on this subject in an easy and entertaining manner, and promised him a sight of her sketches another time.

Before he took leave, Mrs. Rawstorne was introduced to him, and Worthington was much pleased with her respectable appearance.

In the evening, on the Steyne, George perceived his fair incognita, accompanied by her mother, and he was advancing towards them, when he perceived they were joined by some genteel looking people, with whom he was not acquainted.

The next day he called at Rose Cottage, under pretence of seeing the

sketches: these were really well executed, and he thought he could not say enough in their praise.

As the drawings were turned over, she gave an account of each place in so entertaining a manner, that the time passed unheeded. In the course of the visit, the conversation turned on books and foreign literature, and, finding George understood Spanish, she expressed a wish, with bewitching simplicity, that he would give her a few lessons.

There was no retreat for George; the lady proved a very docile scholar, and every day appeared more charming in his eyes. He had now continued his visits at the Cottage, unnoticed by his friends, for more than a fortnight: it was known that he was acquainted with Miss Rawstorne, as they had been often met together, and that he visited at the

house was no secret; but his constant daily calls had not been noticed, and though he had been rallied on his losing his heart, it had not been suspected that Miss Rawstorne's winning manners had made any serious impression.

CHAP. XII.

BRIGHTON still continued very gay ; and among the arrivals was Worthington's friend, Mr. Newcombe ; they dined together the first day he came, and in the evening walked on the Steyne.

“ G—d bless me !” cried Newcombe,
“ here's Jack Rawstorne !”

George had perceived Mrs. and Miss Rawstorne approaching, but he saw no gentleman with them ; his friend however soon explained the matter by asking

how long she had been there ; and hastening to meet the ladies, he shook Miss Rawstorne violently by the hand, declared he was devilishly glad to see her ; and then continued addressing her in a style so totally foreign to that refined retirement to which she seemed so much attached, that George began to doubt whether his friend was in his right senses.

Mr. Newcombe loudly extolled her excellent riding ; reminded her of clearing a five-barred gate, and declared he had never met with such capital sport since they had hunted together in Hampshire.

George heard all this with an air of perplexity : his friend seemed perfectly in earnest, and Miss Rawstorne betrayed no confusion ; but turning to him, pleasantly observed, that Mr. Newcombe

had quite forgotten her injunctions not to mention her having been in a hunting party. "It was the fashion of the family I was with," continued Miss Rawstorne, "and compliance was a matter of course."

Newcombe now stared in his turn.—
"By Jove, that won't go down:—why, you were the promoter and leader of all our sport; a delightful time of it, we had while you were among us; after your departure, there was no life or spirit left."

"Well," said Miss Rawstorne, "but it is never too late to see one's error, and reform: if it were such a favourite amusement, surely some merit is to be allowed me for my resolution in giving it up."

"Oh, certainly, certainly, a vast deal

of merit ; but I'm not so very sure that that is the case ; come now, I'll bet the best hunter I have, that the cry of the hounds would break up all your fine feelings, and set you off like a rocket."

Miss Rawstoine attempted to laugh off this raillery, which she feared would very much militate against her present plans ; and ingeniously turning the conversation, she so happily continued it in another channel, that George had almost forgotten the five-barred gate when they reached Rose Cottage.

The gentlemen were invited to rest themselves ; tea was introduced ; the harp and singing followed, and it was near eleven before they took leave.

" What a strange devil that is," cried Newcombe, taking George's arm as they walked from the cottage : " a female,

Proteus!—Jack Rawstorne, in the character of a mysterious recluse! ha, ha, ha!”

George had been not a little perplexed with what had passed between Newcombe and Miss Rawstorne: and in their way home, he endeavoured to learn from him every thing he knew about her. Mr. Newcombe, however, was only able to state what he had known of her since they had become acquainted at Mr. Meggison’s hunting seat; but a few days afterwards, George obtained the following history of Isabella Rawstorne.

The father of this renowned lady, had been a gay, extravagant, dissipated man of fashion, who, dying in the zenith of his career, had left his wife and only child in very limited circumstances.

Mrs. Rawstorne, however, contrived to keep up; in some degree, their former consequence, and being mistress of several accomplishments, she was enabled to give instructions to her daughter, which considerably lessened the expense of her education.

Isabella was at fifteen, a fine promising girl; Mrs. Rawstorne was bent on procuring a good matrimonial settlement for her, and gave the subject of her daughter's *entrée* in the beau-monde, the most *serious* consideration. She whispered to a few of her acquaintance, that her friends had prevailed on her to bring out her dear child; but that the sweet interesting young creature quite shrunk from the thoughts of being brought into public.

A few other similar puffs maternal, served to excite some degree of curiosity

respecting the very emblem of female modesty which was going to be exhibited; Isabella, after all necessary preparations were completed, made her appearance at a distinguished party of fashionables in town, in a plain muslin frock; her extreme youth, countenanced by the fashion of the day, gave an artificial sanction to an exposure that was equally at variance with good taste and female delicacy: her hair was in the most simple form; not an ornament was to be seen about her; and it seemed intended that every one should be reminded by a living representative, that beauty is,

“ When unadorned, adorned the most.”

In spite, however, of this extreme attention to simplicity, there were a few persons so very malicious as to assert that the interesting Isabella had rather

more colour in her cheeks than was natural to her: others, affecting to be charitably inclined, *started the suspicion*, by doubting whether Mrs. Rawstorne would suffer her daughter to rouge; and therefore sought to account for her additional bloom, by the heat of the room, or a flush which a first appearance in company might occasion.

Isabella played her character to admiration: her manners were marked by the utmost diffidence; she seldom lifted her eyes, and answered questions with little more than a monosyllable; unless when an opportunity offered of venturing a remark intended to reach the ear of some rich heir, who might be captivated by her good sense and feminine simplicity of manners.

On her first appearance, she had the good fortune to make but few enemies;

and having found herself successful in two or three observations, the thought of appearing the *child of nature* became so fascinating, that she determined to pursue the character.

Under this mask, she would utter various singular remarks and opinions: these gave her mother opportunities of reproving her daughter for her freedom of speech; and she would observe, what a mere novice in the world her dear Isabella was; educated to despise its absurd and arbitrary customs, she only viewed them through the medium of a well informed and virtuous mind. At balls, excessive bashfulness was designed to be very attractive:—at routs, an air of pensiveness and indifference marked her idea of the amusement of cards; and afforded her mother an opportunity of observing to a sentimental man of fortune; “How absent my

Isabella is ; her thoughts find no satisfaction in this empty scene ; she seeks amusement in her own reflections."

This artful scheme had been pursued for some time with anxious perseverance ; and had been nearly crowned with success.

Lionel Fitzormond was just of age when he first saw Isabella Rawstorne : his mind was highly enthusiastic, and his romantic notions led him to regard the beautiful and interesting girl with the most ardent admiration.

Mrs. Rawstorne having ascertained that he was heir to a very large estate, Isabella continued her artless appearance during Lionel's stay in town, and made considerable impression on his heart : this was very visible to Mrs. Rawstorne, and when Lionel was obliged to leave

London, the parting scene was intended to draw from him an avowal of his love. It had not, however, its desired effect : his affections, though certainly entangled, were not sufficiently entrapped to make a retreat impracticable ; and Isabella was obliged to be contented with such consolation as she could derive from his assurance, that he would very shortly return.

A month had elapsed ; but Lionel was still absent ; Mrs. Rawstorne, however, would by no means give up the idea of his being attached to her daughter ; and having gained intelligence that he was at Bath, she thought it would be very impolitic to suffer his love to cool ; and though a removal to so great a distance was, in many respects, extremely inconvenient, yet in such a cause, no sacrifice was too great.

On Mrs. Rawstorne's arrival at Bath, she learnt that Mr. Fitzormond had been there with his mother and sisters, but they were all gone to Cheltenham, though it was supposed they would soon return, and probably spend the winter at Bath.

Mrs. Rawstorne was not very well pleased to find that Fitzormond's family were likely to witness her designs; but comforted herself with the hope, that if Lionel slipped through her net, another might soon be found, in a place which was continually experiencing a change of company. Mrs. Rawstorne had some acquaintance at Bath, and Isabella was immediately introduced into the fashionable circles.

Beauty is of so undefined a nature, that the face which one man thinks

pretty, another condemns as ordinary ; and it frequently happens that girls having very few claims to loveliness, gain the reputation of beauties, merely because a few of their friends have exerted themselves to report them as such. The world in general, receives the opinions and sentiments of others, to save the trouble of judging for itself ; and if it has no particular interest in the matter, is ready to repeat to the next comer the decisions it has thus adopted. Miss Rawstorne, however, had considerable pretensions to be called a fine girl : her figure was good, and her face, without having regular features, was extremely animated and prepossessing.

With such advantages in her favour, Miss Rawstorne was soon declared a Bath beauty ; and as a variety of beaux were eager to be admitted into her train, Mrs. Rawstorne endeavoured to ascer-

tain which of them would be the most eligible in a matrimonial point of view. Sir William Chalmers, Sir Robert O'Toole, Colonel Bellasyse, Major Abdy, Messrs. Prevost, Chetwynd, two Bensons, and Captain Gordon, with sundry other minor deities, all passed the inquisitorial review of Mrs. Rawstorne; when, after due consideration, the decision was given in favour of Sir William Chalmers; but in order to secure him, a new mode of attack was discovered to be requisite.

Mrs. Rawstorne soon perceived that Sir William had a taste for the fine arts; that he was passionately fond of music, particularly the Italian:—the first masters were immediately procured for Isabella, who, possessing considerable natural genius, made a rapid progress in her studies. Sir William was delighted with her skill in oil painting; and bestowed

the most extravagant encomiums on her singing.

Music and painting now became almost her constant employments :—in the morning her paintings were exhibited, and in the evening her singing received the plaudits of an admiring assembly.

In the meantime, Lionel Fitzormond, who still cherished a tender recollection of the charming Isabella, had been detained at Cheltenham ; but on reading in the newspapers that “ Mrs. Rawstorne and her lovely daughter ” were at Bath, he immediately set out, and a few hours afterwards, arrived at a friend’s house in Pulteney Street.

In the evening Lionel accompanied his friend to a party ; as they approached the house they heard music, and on entering the room, their ears were assail-

ed by an Italian bravura : loud applause succeeded, and the astonished Lionel could scarcely persuade himself that the interesting Isabella, who so lately could utter only the softest ditty, was now before him, dressed in the most fashionable style, conversing in Italian with Sir William Chalmers, a man of notorious gallantry.

He at first imagined that he was mistaken in her person, but the moment their eyes met, he could not be deceived: she affected some little surprize at seeing him ; but with brighter prospects in view, she now regarded her untitled admirer with indifference : she condescended to inform him that the gaieties of Bath had opened her eyes to the delights of fashionable life ; but thinking it prudent to retain some influence over his affections, she hinted that even now, were she to quit the gay scene, she

should be happier in a more retired sphere ; though she avoided giving him any direct encouragement, while there was yet a prospect of gaining a better establishment.

The Baronet, however, had not made up his mind on the subject of matrimony ; and in a short time after Lionel's arrival, he left Bath for London ; and with his departure, Miss Rawstorne perceived all hopes were flown of becoming Lady Chalmers. She now turned her eyes more favourably towards Fitzormond ; but Lionel's love, which had been awakened by the interesting character in which he had first seen her, was put to flight by the sudden change in her appearance ; and Isabella found herself once more without an admirer. She was still the fashion ; still the accomplished Miss Rawstorne ;—yet, the admired Isabella, whose beauty and fine

accomplishments were so highly prized, was without one suitor desiring to call the celebrated possessor of them his own.

Certainly, thought one, she is a beautiful creature, and very clever and accomplished;—but then 't isn't the thing, to have a wife, so much one's superior;—no, it won't do:—give *me* a woman of plain good sense.

“ She would make a fine actress,” said another, “ but I cannot make up my mind to marry her; no,” continued he, viewing her elegant form as she reclined on an ottoman; “ no, I'll not marry an *attitudinarian*; give *me* a woman of modest manners.”

“ That's a girl after my own heart;” cried the city buck; “ but has she got

the ready? no! then damme I'm off;—can't afford to dash without the ready."

Miss Rawstorne had been the subject of these remarks a whole season at Bath, where she had prolonged her stay in expectation of Sir William's return; but hearing he was making a tour in Scotland, Mrs. Rawstorne was eager to exhibit her daughter at some other place, and an invitation to spend a month at a relations in Hampshire was joyfully accepted.

Here a different race of men were introduced to her:—men possessed of large estates, but whose habits were so foreign to the manners to which she had been accustomed, and whose horses and dogs so entirely engrossed their conversation, that Isabella found herself quite a novice among them.

Her mother's sagacity soon discovered that there was room for speculation, and suggested to her dear Isabella, the necessity of her immediately studying horse-flesh, riding, &c. &c.

Isabella saw nothing could be gained in this quarter without duly qualifying herself: with her heart in the business, and a little instruction, she soon became a capital rider; and in a short time, was not behind hand with the most knowing *whip* in the neighbourhood. Her visit however, was over, without advancing one step towards the object she had in view; but as she was earnestly pressed to repeat it, she hoped at a future time she should be more successful.

Mrs. Rawstorne and her daughter arrived in town, where they intended to pass the winter; and as no opening offered for gaining admittance into the higher

circles, they were obliged to be content with a secondary sphere, which had this advantage over the other, that their establishment could be conducted on a less expensive plan; and Mrs. Rawstorne was enabled to visit her friends, and make returns with some little eclat.

CHAP. XIII.

ISABELLA continued the reigning fashionable of her acquaintance in town, without any prospect of realizing her schemes; and having exhausted all the various eccentricities of fashionable manners and dress, she bethought herself of once again appearing as the simple child of nature. Her ornamental and whimsical style of dress was now all laid aside: the plain muslin frock was resumed, and her hair again appeared in the most unstudied form: every thing was gracefully simple; and her manners, though not so infantine as when she first made her

entrée in public, bespoke a diffidence and timidity which had lately been unknown to her.

Fitzormond's romantic attachment had considerably cooled after her treat of the Italian bravura; and the accounts he had lately heard of her dashing appearance in London had almost conquered every spark of affection, when accident again threw him in her company:—agreeably surprized, he beheld her the same innocent creature who had first engaged his love; and immediately discrediting the injurious reports he had heard, his indignation was roused against her calumniators, and a feeling of pity was excited towards the lovely Isabella.

Miss Rawstorne received him with that sweetness of manner which she had always at command: after so many disappointments, she began seriously to think

that as Lionel seemed to be the only one of her admirers who manifested any attachment of a permanent nature, she had better endeavour to secure him without attempting any further speculations.

In this state of mind, she assured him that in all the different societies she had mixed with, she had never felt happy since she had lost sight of that becoming simplicity which was natural to her; and endeavoured to flatter him into a belief, that a respect for his opinion had led her to determine on disregarding the follies of fashion.

Blinded by her easy and apparently un-studied address, Fitzormond was again her captivated swain: he had determined to declare his attachment, when the news of his uncle's serious illness called him away, and on his taking leave of Isabella, some significant expressions of regard

were mingled with his hopes of speedily returning.

Mrs. Rawstorne having much incommoded herself by the extravagant style of living, she had thought it necessary to adopt in London, thought it very convenient to pay another visit to her relations in Hampshire.

Lionel found Mr. Churchill in a very weak state; but his excellent constitution, soon got the better of the attack; and as he was rapidly recovering, Lionel ventured to hint his attachment to Miss Rawstorne; and to entreat his uncle's approbation: this was a point of material consequence; for though he had been brought up as his uncle's heir, it was in Mr. Churchill's power to leave his estates as he thought proper.

Mr. Churchill had early in life married an amiable and sensible woman, whose manners were of the most refined and feminine cast: he had been ardently attached to her, and her death had occasioned him the deepest affliction. She was the only sister of Mrs. Fitzormond, and Lionel bearing a strong resemblance to her, Mr. Churchill had adopted him as his son, and became excessively fond of him.

Lionel had been taught to revere the character of the departed Bertha: it was now his uncle's earnest wish to see him united to a woman who should resemble her; and on Lionel's making his uncle acquainted with his attachment to the interesting Isabella, Mr. Churchill freely gave his consent, convinced from Lionel's character and judgment, that he could not make an improper choice.

This point was no sooner gained, than Lionel was impatient to return to town. Mr. Churchill participated in his feelings, and declared that he found himself so far recovered that he would accompany him.

Mr. Churchill was in earnest ; and they arrived in town about a fortnight after Mrs. Rawstorne and her daughter had left it to pay a visit to Mr. Meggison. Lionel was grievously disappointed ; but his uncle endeavoured to cheer his spirits by saying, “ Well my dear boy, it’s only postponing your meeting one day longer ; we’ll set out immediately to visit a friend of mine, who lives in the neighbourhood of Mr. Meggison’s. We may reach Basingstoke to-night ; fifteen miles before breakfast to-morrow will bring us to Mr. Stuart’s, and it will be hard, if you can’t contrive to obtain an interview with Isabella in the course of the day.”

Lionel highly approved of this plan, which was immediately put into execution: they travelled late in the evening, and rose early in the morning to pursue their journey. As they proceeded, Mr. Churchill began asking further questions about Miss Rawstorne.

On this subject Lionel could dwell for ever: “she is about the middle size, rather above, I think: an elegant figure; with an animated handsome countenance, and her manners particularly feminine and unaffected: there is a peculiar simplicity in her deportment that is quite enchanting——.”

As Lionel was proceeding, a pack of hounds appeared in sight, and a party on horseback approaching at full speed, a female voice was distinguished, emulating the rest in the cry of the chase.

The lady was habited in scarlet, ornamented with black velvet and gold;—she rode with the boldest, and clearing a broad ditch, galloped by the astonished Fitzormond.

“A fine woman that, faith!” cried Mr. Churchill; “one of your dashers:—now I take it,” continued he, “*your* *dulcinea* is as different a being from that as light from darkness; eh?—why, what’s the matter? you don’t seem to understand me: what are you thinking of, Lionel?—but there, that, is easy to guess: you are thinking of Isabella, eh?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And comparing her with that frantic woman that just rode by, eh?—well, I should pity the man that takes *her* for his wife.—There she is again! she’s a capital rider though; but domestic comfort with

such a woman is out of the question: have you any idea who she is?"

Lionel was endeavouring to evade a direct reply, when they met Mr. Eardley, an acquaintance of Mr. Churchill's. After exchanging mutual enquiries, Mr. Eardley spoke of the fox hunt.

"Ah, they passed us just now," observed Mr. Churchill.

"Then you saw Miss Rawstorne, the famous horsewoman,——"

"Miss Rawstorne!" cried Mr. Churchill—"Is she any relation to your Isabella, Lionel?" said he, lowering his voice.

Lionel was confounded and replied not.

“ ’Tis Bell Rawstorne,” cried Mr. Eardley ; “ and the most noted huntress in this country : report says, she is trying hard to bring Sir Robert Buckhurst into her toils.”

Poor Lionel was thunderstruck ; and dreading his uncle’s looks, he hung down his head, without offering a word to clear up the mystery which Mr. Churchill’s countenance indicated he was perplexed with.

“ She came down here about this time last year,” continued Mr. Eardley, “ quite a novice in this kind of sport ; but she was soon up to any thing, and is now become a noted rider ; there isn’t such another all round the country : Bell Rawstorne is a constant toast at all the club dinners in the neighbourhood.”

“ She is a very extraordinary woman.”

indeed ;” said Mr. Churchill ; “ and if all you have been reporting of her is correct, I cannot say that I have any desire of being better acquainted with her.”

Mr. Churchill wished Mr. Eardley a good morning ; and the travellers pursued their journey for some time in silence. Mr. Churchill forbore adverting to what had passed ; leaving it to Lionel to introduce the subject in such a manner as he might think best. He, however, took an opportunity of privately directing the driver to take them to an inn in the neighbourhood, instead of proceeding at once to Mr. Stuart’s.

Lionel was quite at a loss to decide what course he ought to pursue : he felt placed in a most awkward predicament : he had represented Miss Rawstorne to his uncle in a manner as contrary as possible to the style in which she had ap-

peared before him. All the reports which he had heard to her disadvantage now crowded on his memory; and as he considered himself in no way engaged to her, he felt at full liberty either to endeavour to re-establish himself in her favour, or to relinquish all pretensions without ceremony. In the meantime he considered he ought not to leave his uncle in the dark in an affair in which he had so kindly interested himself: it occasioned him a struggle to confess the truth; but Mr. Churchill, who had penetrated the disappointment which was visible in Lionel's countenance, took him kindly by the hand.

“Lionel,” said he, “you have had my free permission to chuse a wife for yourself, and you have been deceived in your judgment:—now all the return which I require for the trouble of this long journey, is, that you will allow me

to introduce you to one of my chusing; a young lady who is every way qualified to make you happy; and if this speculation of mine should succeed, it will, I'm sure, amply repay you for the disappointment you have now met with."

Lionel felt in no very happy humour to admit any new attachment: a sense of pique, to be sure, tempted him to shew the inconstant Isabella that he could forget her; but there was a generosity in his nature that would not permit him to ask the affection of one, for whom he did not feel a sincere attachment; and in his present state of mind he could not conceive it possible he could love again. He consented, however, to be introduced to the lady; and as she, in reality possessed every quality that had recommended the faithless Isabella, he had little difficulty in transferring his affections to the amiable Mary Wentworth.

CHAP. XIV.

MISS RAWSTORNE had not given Lionel credit for the constancy he had shewn ; and, as hinted by Mr. Eardley, having, on her arrival at Mr. Meggison's found a new admirer in a fox-hunting baronet, she thought it not impossible to secure his heart. She put herself under his tuition, and endeavoured to emulate all his exploits. She increased her equestrian fame by riding a race, but was farther than ever from the goal she sought, for not even the most ardent lover of the chase would wish to be eclipsed by his wife.

Dispirited with repeated disappointments, Miss Rawstorne returned to the metropolis, where she became acquainted with a set of fashionables who were infatuated with theatricals : nothing came amiss to Bell Rawstorne : she offered to take a part, and was soon pronounced the heroine of the company ; but though her histrionic fame was highly extolled, and she had distinguished lovers on the stage, no one proposed in real life.

About this time, Miss Rawstorne received the welcome intelligence of a considerable legacy, which had been left to her by a relation. She considered how it might be best turned to her advantage ; and having decided that a new place would be the most proper scene of action, she agreed with some friends to make a tour to the lakes : she was delighted to find more society than she expected ; and a cottage in a romantic

situation being vacant, she prevailed on her mother to engage it. They had no sooner taken possession, than Miss Rawstone began adding every embellishment that she could devise, and the cottage soon acquired so much celebrity, that few persons passed near without requesting permission to pay a visit to the *Lady of the Lake*, as she was sometimes called.

Miss Rawstone received her guests with courteous hospitality, and always pressed them to repeat the visit. She conversed with fluency on a variety of subjects; and, with a fascinating adroitness, entered into a conversation adapted to the taste of her different visitors. With the fashionest, she detailed the scenes of fashionable life with vivacity and humour; with the sober, she could descant on its follies; and with the witty, she could contribute her share of

pleasantry: she was at home in the Wollstonecraft school; she did not shrink from subjects of literature, and even ventured her remarks on politics, where she thought it would further her plans; but all to no purpose:—there was an evident design in all she did, which defeated it's object; and after living a few years *publicly retired*, in the romantic cottage of the lake, she grew weary of the sameness which characterized her amusements; and, bidding adieu to her elegant retreat, she again appeared in the grand theatre of fashionable life, in which she found her acquaintance considerably increased by the introduction which she had obtained to persons of distinction, through the medium of her cottage attractions.

Her efforts to please were again called forth; as occasion required, she continued varying her powers of captivation,

and went through all her changes from simplicity to fashion, from fashion to philosophy, and so on till she came back to simplicity again.

In the autumn, Mrs. Rawstorne and her daughter appeared at Brighton, where accident introduced them to George Worthington. His susceptible heart had been in no small degree ensnared by the witcheries of Rose Cottage; but he no sooner learnt the history and adventures of Bell Rawstorne, than he repented of the attentions he had paid her, and resolved to be more upon his guard; he found, however, it was no easy matter to make a retreat, unless he quitted the place, which he considered would be the most prudent step to take.

There was one expedient which Miss Rawstorne had not yet put in practice: it was reserved for Worthington; and

the day before his departure, he received a note from Mrs. Rawstorne, requesting the favour of a visit from him, before he left Brighton, as she had something of importance to communicate to him.

George was much puzzled to imagine what Mrs. Rawstorne could have to say to him, but could not well avoid obeying the summons.

He was shewn into the parlour, where Mrs. Rawstorne received him alone; she soon opened the business she had undertaken, by noticing that it was fortunate that her daughter was out; that Isabella did not know of his intention to call, or of Mrs. Rawstorne's having written to him: she intreated also that Mr. Worthington would keep that circumstance a profound secret. "My poor Isabella's delicacy would be so much shocked," continued Mrs. Rawstorne, "had she a

suspicion only of what I have thought it right to mention to you. It is a subject which I should be the last person in the world to speak of, were it not that the health of a beloved daughter is connected with it."

"Before you honoured us, Mr. Worthington, with your society, Isabella was all gaiety, life, and spirits; now, her looks are dejected, her present pursuits uninteresting, and her future prospects overcast. Her health is evidently declining; and, unless those hopes are realized to which your attentions have given birth, I have all the agonizing fears of seeing a beloved daughter plunged in distress of mind, perhaps doomed to an untimely grave. I ask no sacrifice of you; I have no right to require you to restore my beloved child to happiness: my Isabella, I am convinced, would sooner die on the spot, than consent to

what I have thought it my duty to do for her. I only state to you, that her affections are entirely your's. I shall not accuse you of having gained them with no intention of making a return ; you are above such dishonorable designs ; I only state facts, leaving you at full liberty to act as you may think proper, when you have given the subject serious consideration."

George was a little confounded with an address, for which he was totally unprepared : he contrived to say something about being highly flattered ; that he was no less concerned than Mrs. Rawstone could be, that Isabella should have regarded him with a partiality which he was not conscious of deserving.

" Ah, Sir, this blindness to your own merit, only carries with it a confirmation

of it ; my poor child immediately discovered your superiority over the general run of young men. She once delivered her sentiments, in which your praise was the cherished theme. She checked herself when she perceived my suspicions were excited, and has been cautious since, in alluding to the subject of them ; but a mother's eye cannot be deceived : since your intention of quitting Brighton has been known to her, she has been miserable ; she avoids me to weep in secret. I know not what course to pursue ; to attempt to divert her thoughts may appear unfeeling, and, I fear, impossible. Perhaps I may venture to entreat you to prolong your stay here a short time, that I may endeavour to soften the prospect of your absence."

George felt it impossible to refuse her request, and consented to postpone his departure for a week.

He was preparing to take leave, when Isabella made her appearance: the dejection which she had thought proper to throw over her countenance, vanished as soon as she perceived who was in the room. She was glad, she said, to have an opportunity of seeing him before he left Brighton, as she could not but be sensible from the interview between her and Mr. Newcombe, which Mr. Worthington had witnessed, he must have formed a very erroneous opinion of her character. He might, perhaps, have heard very exaggerated accounts of her conduct; and affecting the utmost candour, she lamented that the example of others and inexperience had led her into scenes, for which she had, in reality, no taste; she warmly asserted that she had always been fond of retirement, and hoped nothing in future would ever happen to oblige her to mix in a world where there was so little real happiness;

then casting her fine eyes on the ground, she added, with a faltering voice, that the idea of having forfeited his good opinion, had caused her more uneasiness than she could express.

George never remembered to have been placed in so awkward a situation; he uttered a few sentences expressive of his great esteem, and of his admiration of her talents, and made his retreat as expeditiously as he could, but was obliged to promise a repetition of his visit, as Isabella in her sweetest tones, said, “shall we not see you again?”

“Yes, my love,” said Mrs. Rawstone, “Mr. Worthington will call to-morrow.”

In his way home, George pondered on what had passed at Rose Cottage: the more he considered the business, the

more he was persuaded that the mother and daughter acted in concert to prevail on him to stay, in the hope of drawing him into a matrimonial engagement ; he was resolved, however, not to be the dupe of artifice, and the next morning penned a note to Mrs. Rawstorne, expressive of his regret at being prevented from paying the expected visit.

While Miss Rawstorne affords an instance where great talents and accomplishments were made subservient to sinister views, numerous are the examples in the other sex, where avarice, vanity, and ambition, have triumphed over every finer feeling. There are dashing equestrians, fashionable loungers, and ball-room beaux, who, while appearing casually to fall in with the amuse-

ments of the place they *embellish*, are scrutinizing with calculating caution, the weight of the purse of the fair ladies whom they *condescend* to *honor* with their notice.

Colonel ———, who piqued himself on being a connoisseur in female beauty, confessed that he was too poor to marry for love: “a man *must* live in a certain style; he *must* have his horses, and a proper establishment.” Fortunately a fifty-thousand-pounder fell in his way; he made advances, and the lady smiled upon him. Were the Loves and Graces nestled in that smile? no; but dogs and horses were. Was the lady’s figure good? Pshaw! the figure *he* was intent upon, was that which preceded four cyphers in the three per cents. ! and he wedded a coarse and vulgar woman, whom he had been the first to ridicule. It was now *his* turn to be laughed at; but his ca-

pital style of living, good dinners, and excellent wine, soon turned the current in his favour. His matrimonial bargain was now “a devilish good spec:” the Colonel “a d—d clever fellow:” and he had the satisfaction of hearing the most flattering encomiums lavished on his entertainments, while *he* acutely felt, “what’s a table richly spread, with”—*such* “a lady at its head.”

Young Grubson, with a handsome person and agreeable manners, inherited the hoarded wealth of a plodding tradesman. His fortune placed him above the influence of pecuniary views ; he spurned the very idea of marrying for money ; but, ambitious of being allied to rank, he united himself to age and deformity, for the paltry gratification of being announced, wherever they went, “Mr. and Lady Cassandra Grubson.”

The plain but amiable daughter of a rich West Indian, received the addresses of a man of considerable talents, who professed a real regard for her. Her mental charms and literary taste were *everything* to *him* ; money was “vile trash ; mere dross : not worthy a moment’s consideration ;” when suddenly, a violent hurricane swept away all the father’s plantations, and with them, all Mr. —’s love.

Charles Towerton commenced his career rather to the eastward of Temple Bar : his prospects were fair, his mercantile connexions respectable ; he had gained the affections of a lovely and deserving girl of his own rank in life, and no obstacles appeared to thwart his hopes. An excursion to Brighton introduced him into a higher sphere : he felt that he was admired ; his consequence increased, and he aspired to a

Brighton belle. Charles now looked down upon his city-friends; they were "absolutely grovelling:" he turned his back upon them, and went into the light dragoons. Towerton was now the Adonis of the regiment: he had not been aware of half his merits; his figure was symmetry itself!--he must look higher. His ambition knew no bounds; and leaving the Brighton belle to wear the willow, he thought to figure in the first circles in town; but here he met with a check: his pretensions were treated with contempt; and Charles Towerton has found too late, that in deserting the only woman he ever truly loved, he had thrown away his happiness, and had bartered his respectability in society, for a life of folly and dissipation.

The Honourable Ferdinand Le Bel had determined not to marry any thing under half a plum, till the tip of his nose.

daily assuming a more formidable crimson, gave timely notice that his expectations must be lowered. Still nothing eligible presented itself: what was to be done?—finances low ;---tailor impertinent ;---nose uncontrollable: he took off a few thousands more, and a chandler's heiress became the Honourable Mrs. Le Bel.

Captain ——— found a military life very much to his satisfaction, till a better thing appeared in view, in the shape of a rich rectory. “ Sermonizing would be a horrid bore ;” but there were many advantages to counterbalance such a dull concern: the living was in a sporting country ; pack of hounds, and several “ good fellows as ever lived,” in the neighbourhood ; and “ a drudging devil of a curate.”---’Twas easy to change scarlet for black ; and Captain ——— exhibits the disgraceful character of a dissipated clergyman : while Sir Nicholas

Cantwell, one of his unprincipled associates, finding it convenient to be enamoured of the religious heiress of the Bishop of ———, suddenly affects reform; and with impious hypocrisy, assumes the mask of sanctity to accomplish his mercenary views: but still, he is “an honourable man:---so are they all,---all honourable men.”



END OF VOL. II.

